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ULRICK THE READY

BY

STANDISH O'GRADY

Author of

"THE COMING OF CUCULAIN"
"IN THE GATES OF THE NORTH"
"THE TRIUMPH AND PASSING OF CUCULAIN"
"THE FLIGHT OF THE EAGLE"
ETC.

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PREFACE.

The following tale formed itself out of the study of an eventful period, that of the Spanish Fleet which Philip III. despatched against these islands in 1602. The historic setting includes the landing of the Spanish army at Kinsale, the intrepid ride of Lord Mountjoy, unattended, through Munster, to meet the invaders, the rising-out of the Queen's Irish to his call, the heroic defence of Kinsale by Don Juan de Aquila, the march across Ireland—north and south—of the insurgent lords of Ulster to his assistance, and the ruinous overthrow which, contrary to all expectation, they sustained at the hands of the Royalists, a defeat which proved the death blow at the same time of Spanish ambition and of the feudal constitution of society in Ireland. The tale as it travels just touches or glances at these historic and epoch-marking events, its essential purpose, if it have any, being only to exhibit life as it was then lived in Ireland, a work for which the materials abound even to profusion, if only the art to use them be not wanting. In other respects, too, this stormy century lends itself better than the rest to the work of the historical novelist, so thronged is it with heroic, romantic, or picturesque figures,

so vital, too, so steeped in passion and purpose, so teeming with wild contrasts—alluring lights and fearsome shadows. It is the wild ending and the wild beginning of so much!

The Celtic principality with which the first part of the tale is concerned is the region which has been already celebrated by Mr. Froude in his spirited novel, "The Two Chiefs of Dunboy." Indeed, the person referred to as "Son of the Knight," was the ancestor of one of Mr. Froude's "Two Chiefs."

S. O'GRADY.

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Part I.

A RIDE THROUGH A REALM.

ULRICK THE READY.

CHAPTER I.

A PLEASANT YOUNG GENTLEMAN.

GLENGARIFFE is one of the loveliest spots in the world. It was more lovely in the days of Queen Bess. The hollies were as bright and more numerous, the clusters of the rowan tree as scarlet and much more abundant. The little flooded fiords shone between richer boscage; white torrents as musical danced down ravines more deeply wooded. Yet Sir George Carew, President "of all the Munsters," writing from its precincts, only found it "a strong and fast place," saw there only mountain gates shut and barred by O'Sullivan Bere, while the much admired Mangerton figures in his dispatches as a "hideous and uncouth mountain." Elizabethan men saw no beauty in Glengariffe.

It would have delighted Spenser, indeed, but Spenser never penetrated so far to the west. Otherwise, probably enough, Glengariffe, its rough consonants softened into some liquid-flowing synonym would have found its way into the "Faery Queen."

It was, then, with no intention of recuperating exhausted nature in that sweet haunt of idlers, that on the 24th of September, 1601, a young horseman rode along the winding way which led from Bantry to the Glen. It was a good road enough considering the times, narrow, hilly, and uneven, but fairly well metalled with sea or pit gravel. The young horseman did not dally by the way. He cheered onward his big black steed, even applying from time to time the stimulus of whip and spur. He was a bearer of tidings, great tidings, tidings of the landing of the Spanish Fleet yesterday at Kinsale. He rode post from Bantry to Dunboy, bearing the news to his chief, O'Sullivan Bere, lord of all this region. There was war on the wind. The lad's weight was a mere feather to the big steed that bore him, an animal of great speed and endurance, a cross between the war-horse and the hackney. Lazy rustics, according to a custom commoner then than now, when there was something really worth looking at on Irish roads, suspended their harvest labours and gazed after him, watched the red cape flickering and the white plume dancing. They were always glad to see a gentleman, it brought a little of brightness and colour into their lives, and in those days a gentleman was not only brilliant to look upon, but well worth talking about. He carried the issues of life and death for many a poor peasant ; the wain of the rustic was so often hitched to his star. Between two gazing rustics some such conversation as the following took place :—

First rustic—" There goes Ulrick the Ready."

Second ditto—"Sure enough, it's no one but himself."

"I wonder where he's going now?"

"Well, I don't know, but" (emphatically) "he knows well himself."

First rustic—"He's the purtiest *duine-uasal** in the kingdom. The devil himself wouldn't frighten Ulrick. He's for Dunboy, I'm thinking."

Second ditto—"He won't get there."

"Why, now?"

"The Sons of the Knight will hold him."

The first rustic, upon whom a great light seemed to dawn, made a wonderful grimace at this intelligence. He came close to his companion, and there on the instant, without any other excuse, the two worthies sat down in the midst of the unreaped corn, and collogued long and impressively about the politics of "the kingdom," which did not all mean Ireland, but only O'Sullivan's country, and about "the king," who was not at all King Philip, but the Chieftain, O'Sullivan Bere. As we know nothing of the "Sons of the Knight," we will just follow the track of this young gentleman on horseback, to whom it seems as if the Straits of Glengariffe were about to prove a sort of Caudine Forks. That he did not think himself in any danger was evident. He travelled alone, and in peaceful habiliments. He wore a sword, indeed, but every gentleman wore a sword, and bore a lance, but it was carried more as an ornament than with any intention of using it. It was a very long lance, full four feet longer

* Scott always writes this word as *dhooney wassal*; it means simply gentleman, *duiné* = man, *uasal* = noble or gentle.

than those worn by the Queen's horsemen. It was slender and light in the hand. He held it erect as he rode, the haft resting in some pocket of the horse furniture. Underneath his short red cape he wore a buff coat, gilded considerably, and curiously and even artistically stained. But everyone wore a buff coat. Even in peace, war was too possible for Irish gentlemen to go quite unarmed. A copious frilled collar surrounded the young fellow's neck. His collar and his cape suggested loyalty and civility, but an official would not have approved of the cut of his hair, for the lad wore the highly illegal glibb, and his copious and glossy brown hair fell over his collar and down upon his shoulders. He showed a very faint moustache too, but civility and loyalty were not now so identified with the absence of the *crommeal* as they used to be. He was a good-looking youth, with a peculiarly frank and fearless expression of countenance, and was evidently gay and light-hearted, though just now freighted with the gravest tidings. The Spaniards had landed yesterday at Kinsale, but it was not grave news to him, only great news. There was war on the wind, and that was enough for him, and for thousands like him who were born and bred for war, and for war only, and cared little whence it came. He did not know whether his lord would fight for the Spaniard or against him, though he suspected the latter, for his lord was a Queen's man. But he knew that O'Sullivan would have to draw his sword on some side in the big approaching struggle, and that was enough. War was coming, and the young fellow's

heart rose to meet it. Send us war in our time, O Lord! was the inarticulate prayer of tens of thousands of young Irishmen like him, and their prayer was granted, rather more than enough, poor fellows!

As he rode he sang some Gaelic ditty, lugubrious and long, and that with a voice of far greater compass and power than his physique, which was not Herculean, would seem to justify. The lad was really slender, though the buff coat made him look stouter than he was. With a heart as light as a lark's, he sang loud and high a melancholy song. He rode without stirrups on a stout, comfortable-looking saddle, which indeed was no saddle, but a piece of horse furniture peculiar to the age, called a shank-pillion, braced tight to the steed by a broad sheathing or belt. His long hose were of fine wool, dark green; the knitter had knitted long before she turned the heel of those stockings. His shoes of brown Spanish leather shone with silver buckles, and were adorned at the heels with large spurs of the same metal. He looked, what in fact he was, some great man's darling, and was indeed a pretty specimen of a young Irish brave, of the equestrian order. His stature was not great, but he so carried himself as to set off his inches to the utmost. He looked brave, I say, and looked also as if he knew it.

Half way up a steep hill he permitted his steed to walk. The easy motion was favourable to song. Loud and full, and much seemingly to the singer's satisfaction, it now rolled from his open mouth. Pausing for a moment for breath as he

was nearing the crest of the hill, he commenced with redoubled energy a fresh verse,—

> Then up rose Deering and Diarmid and my noble Oscar;
> Oscar drew his spear from its sheath: Great the noise!
> The sound of it was like the roar of a waterfall,
> Like the—

Something the young fellow saw from the hill-top which he had just reached acted like a pair of invisible scissors, cutting sharp off the thread of heroic verse. He came to a full stop, muttering, "O Mary! a hosting, and round the sons of Owen."

CHAPTER II.

THE IRISH LAND QUESTION—A MAILED AGITATOR.

About half a mile from our young friend was assembled what in Elizabethan Ireland was called a hosting. A compact mass of horse and foot stood motionless in a field green with the springing aftergrass. In their midst a young man, bare-headed, but otherwise in complete armour, seemed to harangue them. He stood upon a small knoll which served for a rostrum; it was in fact the tomb of some prehistoric hero. Every face was directed towards the orator, every head bent slightly forward, but no sound came from the martial assembly indicative of assent or consent. Quite a grove of horsemen's staves, what we now call lances, of pikes and long battle-axes—stood above this small host, the steel heads of which glittered as the weapons slightly shook in the hands of the holders. As a spectacle it would have at any other time delighted the eyes of our hero. All the horsemen and some of the footmen wore armour. Mantles abounded here of coarse cloth or fine, or even of silk, usually of some vivid hue, scarlet, blue, or green, or checked of different colours. Some wore their mantles like cloaks, some theirs rolled round their breasts above one shoul-

der and under the other like Highlanders; most of the men carried their mantles so, revealing the heavy-kilted tunic which reached to the knees, and was confined at the waist by the sword belt. There were pipers here, too, their pipes silent just now. The whole scene shone with light and colour. A faint smoke exhaled from this warlike assembly; it came from the burning Matches of the gun-men. Some fields distant from this irregular mass of armed men, stood another, but drawn up in distinct files, an ordered battalion, all foot men. They carried colours but furled round a standard. This body of warriors were only spectators; they did not share in the deliberation of the military parliament—merely watched it from a distance.

"O Mary! a hosting, and round the sons of Owen," muttered our young friend as this sight broke upon his startled eyes. He sprang from his horse and drew him back below the line of the hill top. He desired to contemplate the scene from a less conspicuous place, as well as to take counsel with his own mighty heart. The rustics had foretold that our friend would be held by "the Sons of the Knight," and he himself has but just announced that it was a vision of "the sons of Owen" which startled him. Owen and the Knight would, therefore, seem to be the same formidable individual, and that was so.

The more the lad looked and listened, the less he liked what he saw and heard. After a rapid survey of the military parliament, his eyes settled with a keener interest upon the ordered files of that second assembly of armed men which stood apart

by themselves. "Bounaght," he murmured; the word meant "hired soldiers." Then he whistled low, and murmured again, "Clan Sweeny, by the lord's hand!" The men with the banner were regular disciplined soldiery, whom he recognised by certain signs and tokens to be members of the most famous fighting tribe in Ireland, a tribe altogether devoted to war, the *condottieri* of the South, and he was so certain of this that he swore it by the hand of his chief.

Meantime that young man on the knoll harangued his parliament with as much earnestness as any parliament could be harangued, indeed, with a most passionate emphasis. He was a tall and nobly formed man, with a close-cropped black head and a short peaked beard. He seemed to labour under some violent agitation. Once he made a circle round his neck with his mailed hand which immediately he flung aloft as much as to say, "I will hang for it if need be." More than once he drew his sword and pointed towards the west with looks full of defiance, and then drove the blade home into its sheath with a clang. Anon he swept the whole circle with a fierce look of inquiry, causing a general vibration and scintillation of the steel beads of the weapons. Not one cheer, however, not a single exclamation arose from his grim auditory. The deafening cheers of parliaments in frieze and broad-cloth were conspicuously absent. And yet this mailed orator harangued upon a topic which we, too, find interesting enough. He was delivering himself on the land question. From time to time, as his voice swelled with the agitation under which

he laboured, distinct words and phrases reached the ears of our eavesdropper behind the hill's crest.

"Ua Súilleabháin—tioránach—tioránuil—m'athair, Eoghan Mac Diarmuda—mo thír—Ard-rioghan agus an Cuinsil—Ard-ri na Spáinneach." That is to say: "O'Sullivan—tyrant, tyrannical—my father, Owen, son of Dermot—my country—the High Queen and the Council—the High King of the Spaniards."

Now it may be fairly asked how is it that our young friend, the servant of the chieftain, riding through his lord's country, finds his way blocked by a great force which he evidently regards as hostile and dangerous? Has O'Sullivan's country been invaded to-day by the forces of some powerful bordering chieftain? Not so. An invading army would be better employed than in holding a parliament and listening to speeches. Had the country been invaded the sky would have been by this time darkened with the smoke of burning houses, alive with driven cattle, loud with the shouting of plunderers, and the wailing of women. No, this is no invasion, and yet here is a powerful and hostile force assembled in the midst of O'Sullivan's country. It was no invasion. It was a rebellion.

In every Irish principality there was a chief lord *de facto* of the territory; and there was also one who regarded himself as the rightful chief, and regarded the lord *de facto* as a usurper. In this territory "the Sons of the Knight" represent the opposition. They have learned that the chieftain intends to play a Spanish part

in the approaching war; therefore, they are equally resolved to stand for the Queen. That mailed young orator already gives himself out as the "Queen's O'Sullivan," and his passionate hatred of the chief, the usurper, mingles, as human motives will, with a passionate devotion to the cause of the Queen. Last night he introduced into the territory a famous captain of *condottieri*, a grim, one-eyed, seasoned old Trojan, who had been for some twenty years eating the bread of honest war-like industry in every province of Ireland. This hired captain and his two hundred disciplined fighters are now in the pay of the orator. They stand ranked there in the background to show this loose congregation of his personal and hereditary friends that he, the Son of the Knight, really means business, and that the rebellion will have an immediate solid support; also doubtless with the unavowed purpose of overawing his parliament.

NOTE.—A few years before this the reigning chieftain of this territory, Sir Owen O'Sullivan, who had been knighted by the Queen's own hand in London, was, with great injustice, deposed by an order signed by her and the Privy Council, and his nephew, Donal, raised to the chieftainship. The Ulrick of our story is servant to this Donal, now captain of all the O'Sullivan nation and supreme Prince of Bere and Bantry. The Imperial Government having deposed Sir Owen reserved for him a portion of the territory in the neighbourhood of Bantry, including the picturesquely situated Castle of Carriganass, built strongly on the edge of a rough torrent, hence its name, *i.e* Rock of the Waterfall. Here Sir Owen died, transmitting his rights to his son Owen Ogue. Young Owen, Owen Ogue, is the mailed orator of the story

CHAPTER III.

A SMALL ABDIEL.

Our young eavesdropper came to a speedy resolution. He determined to hide his steed in some broken ground hard by, then take to the hills, and fetching a compass, evade these people and continue on foot his journey into the west. As he was about to do so he heard voices behind him and the sound of horses' hoofs. He turned and saw a single horseman ascending the slope surrounded by half-a-dozen petticoated warriors, light-footed, agile kernes, with swords dangling at their hips, shields slung over their shoulders, and spears in their hands. The sight compelled him to a new resolution. If he endeavoured to escape now these fellows would give chase. In his heavy buff coat he would soon be overtaken and killed. A kerne could fling his spear like an arrow from the bow; neither sword nor horseman's staff would avail Ulrick against their darts. So perforce he adopted a bold resolution. Vaulting into his shank-pillion, he rode over the crest of the hill and down the other side towards the hosting. He preferred the chance of riding unnoticed past this meeting to the certainty of being killed or taken by those kernes. Meantime

that mailed orator seemed to be making way with his auditory; the weapon-points were in violent agitation, the mass of men seemed shaken with excitement. Ulrick's hopes rose. He walked his horse, keeping at the same time a bright and wary eye fixed on the assembly. At the foot of the hill, between it and the hosting, ran a noisy mountain torrent. He knew it well. Close to the road there was a pool; he had caught trout with his hands in that pool when he was a little boy. The remembrance of one monster brown trout, taken there once after an exciting chase, mingled curiously with his thoughts at this moment. And still the voice of the orator swelled and sank, and no sign came from the rapt auditory that he had been discovered. The road here was a mere track without fences. The hosting overflowed from the field and covered the road. The centre of that circle, viz., the knoll from which the mailed orator held forth, was on the right. Beyond the road, to the left and south, was a piece of level ground meared by a cliff. Along that level ground our hero intended to pass. A little further on he saw a projecting point of rock, passing which he would be concealed from all eyes. Could he reach it unobserved? He left the road, and felt somewhat reassured when the clicking of his horse's hoofs fell silent on the grass. It was a wet, marshy piece of ground, though not exactly a bog. At this moment he heard distinctly the words of the orator, "I stand for the high Queen of all Ireland, Captain of the Captains," he cried, as our cavalier evaded the highway and noiselessly began to pace along that marshy ground a few

yards behind a row of glistening shields. But, alas!

In the rear of this martial assembly, which drank so eagerly the rebellious eloquence of their leader, stood a boy, excluded from the deliberations of the parliament. He had been squeezed, pushed, and elbowed from the interior, and was now quite outside the ring. He seemed barely fifteen years of age, yet he had a sword by his side, a little round brown leathern buckler on his back, and two light polished spears in his hand. His sword was too big for him; indeed, it was the sabre of his sire, a brave kerne who had fallen in the Desmond wars. His bright blue eyes, as he suddenly turned round on our traveller, looked out through a fringe of golden hair, which was brushed down smooth and showed signs of recent careful trimming. His linen shirt, yellow as the tassels of the willow, was clean and fresh, amplifying into innumerable heavy plaits from the waist downward. His face, like Shakespeare's schoolboy, shone with soap and water. His green mantle folded round his shoulders was secured on the breast by a pin as long as a dagger, with a round head of bright brass. The youngster looked like some mother's darling, fresh from her loving hands, and with her kisses still on his rosy cheek. And this indeed was so. Half an hour ago he had left his cabin higher up on the banks of this descending stream. His sweet mother sat at home now, weeping, sore at heart, yet glad, too; her boy would be a soldier, not a churl. The little kerne, meantime, gently but firmly excluded by his big fellow-tribesmen, was getting as tired

of Owen Ogue's oratory as Eutychus of St. Paul's. He did not understand what was being said, and found the contemplation of broad backs and horses' tails and all sorts of many-hued warlike legs somewhat fatiguing. He was listless, apathetic, and ready to be interested in any new thing, so the sudden cessation of the noise of our friend's horse's hoofs as they left the highway caused him to look around. He recognized at once the passing horseman, and knew enough of tribal politics to be aware that one of the lord's men had no right to be here.

So with a shrill, boyish voice and as loud as he could scream, he cried—

"A spy, a spy, a spy, Ulrick the Ready, son of Shane, a spy, a spy!"

Suddenly some four hundred angry and startled faces were turned in this direction, and the boy's note of alarm was re-echoed everywhere—

"Ulrick the Ready," "the lord's man," "Ulrick MacShane," "take him," etc., etc., and there was a confused rush towards the hapless equestrian.

The moment the little kerne had opened his mouth, Ulrick quickly and fiercely drove his big spurs into his horse's sides. The horse reared and plunged, but did not get forward; the softness of the ground impeded him. When he did, Ulrick had a fair chance of escape by riding down those in his way. But while the horse struggled with the soft ground, our hero's further progress was effectually barred. One quick-witted gallowglass in chain-mail, ran across that level ground, halted, turned eastward, drove the butt of his

long battle-axe into the ground, and with both hands held its head inclined forward at an angle of forty-five degrees or less.

It was the common military movement of that time for the reception of cavalry. Another ran to his side and did the same; also a third, and a fourth, and the way was barred. There in front of Ulrick gleamed a row of shining points of steel, responding with a very emphatic "No" to his mute demand for free passage.

In this assembly of tribesmen there were evidently some prompt and disciplined soldiers Ulrick returned to the way, sat up straight on his horse, threw his head well back, with its broad-leafed hat and tossing plume, and trotted right towards the heart of the crowd.

Meantime the orator had resumed his helmet. He stood in the midst of the road waiting to receive the youth, and wore a calm and haughty demeanour. His brothers stood behind him. At his side was a fine-looking old man, beardless but wearing a heavy white moustache, who scrutinized Ulrick with a critical and slightly amused expression.

This old man had often carried Ulrick on his shoulders, and often held him on his knees at feasts. The high, saucy, and belligerent air of his young friend amused the old man; it reminded him, too, of the flight of time. That old man was a pillar of the intended rebellion and chief counsellor to the Sons of the Knight.

The rest of the crowd took their cue from their leaders; they fell aside out of the way; "stood refused," so to speak, curious to see what

would come next. It was the first bit of action which the incipient rebellion had yet produced.

As Ulrick drew nigh to the leaders he did not seem in the least embarrassed by the coldness of his reception and the louring glances with which he was awaited. He saluted the mailed agitator with a degree of respect amounting to reverence. He bared his head, bowed low, and held his hat to his breast, for Owen Ogue was the second best man in the realm, being eldest son of Sir Owen O'Sullivan, Knight, once lord and captain of the O'Sullivan nation. His salutation was hardly noticed by the object of it. Nothing abashed, Ulrick saluted the other Sons of the Knight, then that fine-looking old man, and afterwards several others who stood near the leaders, using as he did so all manner of curiously graduated motions which seemed to have respect to the rank of the person saluted. While the youth was distributing his salutations to the company as if this were a great parley in which he represented some mighty potentate, and was charged with the delivery of important matter, the old man and Owen Ogue conversed together in low tones. As soon as their colloquy seemed finished, Ulrick, still holding his hat in his hand, but sitting erect, with a voice loud, clear and sonorous, addressed the assembly. Had he been the ambassador of a prince, he could not have thrown more dignity into his tones and manner. It was partly imitation, no doubt, but there was native pride in it, too, and conscious rectitude of purpose. He would speak out for his dear lord though four hundred angry faces loured upon him.

"Owen Ogue mac an Riddera" (Son of the Knight), cried the lad, "and you gentlemen of the reserved lands, and others assembled here to-day in arms, I, Ulrick, son of Shane, son of Randal, man to O'Sullivan, ride to my lord with tidings of great moment. I charge you at your peril that you stop me not nor delay me on my way. Clear the road, gentlemen, and let me pass."

The age of oratory was yet to come to Ireland, but the effect of strong and prompt speech is never out of date. Ulrick's clear voice penetrated every ear. His words were defiant and even domineering.

That old man moved close to his pupil; with his eyes still fixed on Ulrick, and lips which barely moved, he murmured in his ear,—

"A soft answer; let him pass. Flatter him. Ask the news."

The knight's son quickly took the hint. He answered, but with a voice still hoarse from much speaking—hoarse, too, with suppressed passion.

"Who stops or delays thee, O Ulrick the Ready, son of Shane? It is not usual with thee to be stopped or delayed. Pass on to the lord. But tell us first thy news. Are they public and for the clan, or for the lord's private ear?"

The youth blushed slightly at that implied compliment to his prowess, and the unique position which he held in the clan, owing to O'Sullivan's favour. He answered more mildly.

"For the Clan. Don Shan de Aquila has landed in great force at Kinsale. Answer me now in turn, Owen, Son of the Knight; wherefore are ye here in arms to-day met in solemn hosting at

the grave of Lon? Tell me, that I may repeat all to my lord."

The old man murmured fresh directions, this time, however, in vain.

"Tell thy lord," said the other, whose chafing spirit had quite escaped from the control of his mentor, "that we are met here to-day to uphold the authority of our Queen against all her foes, against all runagates from abroad, and all traitor lords at home. We are here for the Queen. Tell that to thy lord, O Ulrick the Ready, son of Shane."

"Ay, lad, for the Queen," cried many voices, and now at last a fierce shout, though far from unanimous, broke from the ranks of the rebels. As it subsided, one voice was raised in a tone of mockery—"Ay, lad, tell it to Donal na Peepa," and "Donal na Peepa" was passed from mouth to mouth with wild laughter. The phrase meant Donald of the Pipes, Donald the Piper. It was an outworn nick-name, relic of a time when the chief was a landless and roving youth ere the Queen had raised him up and set him on high over the tribe.

The blood rushed to Ulrick's face, reddening all his face and neck. Plain enough was it now to the youth that he was in the midst of his lord's deadly foes. His form for one moment seemed to shrink and shiver at the insulting tones of those mockers, but in an instant he recovered himself and sat again erect and defiant. His eyes flashed through his tears.

"Owen, son of the Knight," he said, "and you gentlemen confederate with him in treachery and rebellion, I have heard from the rhymers

how it was said of old times by Amargin, son of Eirial, that no true man leaves alive the field where his lord lies slain. That was rightly said, but I say another thing, and I think there are those here who will not like it. I say that no true man leaves alive the place where his lord has been insulted as you have insulted my lord, the high chief of all our nation this day. I demand the right of single combat, which it is unlawful to refuse, and I will fight you, man by man, beginning with that churl yonder (*bodach so*) who stands next but one to Angus the Striker on his left, for it was he first who put the insult upon my lord. And I swear to you by my lord's hand that those of you who escape me to-day will not escape him to-morrow, and that the bloody eric which he will exact upon you for me slain will be remembered till—"

The young orator got no further. At this moment the moon-shaped blade of a battle-axe glittered above his head and descended with a dull sound.

"That was a coward's blow!" cried a voice from the ranks of the clansmen. It rang out clear and prompt as if an echo or quick natural response to the stroke. Simultaneously the hands of the slain youth dropped to his side, the reins fell, and the plumed hat. His head stooped forward, and he fell against the horse's neck, and the whole limp body rolled to one side, and would have tumbled prone to the earth had not a lad who stood near the leader, and who was in fact his youngest brother, sprung forward and received the falling body in his arms.

CHAPTER IV.

A YOUNG AVENGER.

"WHO struck that blow?" repeated the same voice, in accents charged with anger and menace. The clansmen, who had previously stood apart from the parleyers, had swarmed around the spot where the lad fell. Many voices were raised; every face was angry and excited. After a long interval of internal peace and of friendly relations between all, the first blow had been struck, the first man slain in the new war. Their minds were variously moved. "Who struck that blow?" again cried the same voice, and a young man wearing a brazen morion and breastplate, and with his hand on his swordhilt, burst through the crowd.

"I," answered sternly a huge gallowglass of an antique style.

He wore a tall helmet with cheek-pieces and a battle-dress of steel rings so polished that they glittered like spangles at every movement of his colossal frame. He stood at ease, both hands grasping the shaft of his long battle-axe, on which he half leaned. He said nothing else, only looked steadily on his opponent.

Quick and fierce now on both sides rang the

words of insult and defiance, which, though full of deadly meaning, were also a common form, and the usual preface of such encounters.

"Thou art a churl and a coward."

"Thou art a liar."

"I will cut off they head and trample on thy forehead."

In a second the young avenger had snatched a battle-axe from a by-stander, and handled it like an expert.

"Give way there!" he cried; and "Art thou ready, coward?"

The big gallowglass, on his side, seemed no way loath for the fray, though there was no such excitement in his demeanour. He was not one of those men who may be described as near their temper.

"He is not," said a stern voice.

It was that of a grim-visaged, one-eyed man, who quietly thrust himself between the combatants. He, too, wore a tall brazen morion, also a long shirt of leathern mail, sewn all over with little bars of glittering steel, and held on his left arm a little triangular buckler. He was an old man, but a formidable-looking old man, and certainly not a good-looking old man. His nose was broken and shapeless, his blind eye closed, and the lids quite collapsed and retracted, as if the eye-ball were missing; a red scar issuing from the morion traversed an extensive cheek smooth-shaved, and was lost in his heavy white moustache. He looked what he was—a hoary and hardened professor of the art of war.

It was Murrough na Mart Mac Sweeny, a

famous captain of mercenaries, Murrough the tracker of oxen, now in military service with the Sons of the Knight. He was the commander of that body of disciplined soldiers drawn up at some distance from the field of parley. Murrough na Mart was a vicious old war scoundrel, and looked it, but he was brave, a skilled soldier, and an honest workman in his fearful trade. His hideous face wore a look of reliableness and valour, and his one eye—it was blue and bright—looked out frankly from under a composed brow. Few of my readers have ever heard of this one-eyed captain, but he was a famous man in his day; Lord Burleigh and Walsyngham and the Queen were well acquainted with Murrough na Mart. Murrough had in his time commanded large armies, and also small; now he only led two companies. Such are the vicissitudes of a professional career.

"He is not ready, young man," said he, interposing quietly between the gallowglass and the young avenger, and fixing the latter with that eloquent one eye. "He is not ready just yet, and, young man, have a care for thyself, and go back, for it is easier for me to send my sword through thee than to say I will do it."

Meantime a few silent figures quietly ranged themselves by his side, while others gently but firmly drew the big gallowglass to the rear. At a signal from the Son of the Knight, that company of drilled warriors headed by Murrough had thrust themselves into the disordered assembly. These open-air parliaments had a strong tendency to eventuate in bloodshed. To prevent such an issue

was, amongst others, one of the reasons why the Sons of the Knight had drawn that company to the place of meeting. Owen Ogue now stepped up to the young avenger, and laying his hand on his shoulder, said,—

"Spare thy wrath this time, O Con, son of Con; Ulrick the Ready is not slain, or even hurt. He was struck purposely with the timber haft of the battle-axe, gently, just enough to silence him. Come and see."

The young fellow darted to the spot where the recumbent form of Ulrick lay, still supported in the arms of the youth who had received him as he fell. Reassured after a moment's examination, he stooped and kissed Ulrick's still insensible lips, retired into the crowd, and was no more seen. Whether his vengeful action was prompted merely by the cowardly character of the blow or by personal affection, I cannot say, but rather suspect the latter. In this rebellious assembly Ulrick had many personal friends.

Owen Ogue began now to re-assert his interrupted authority. With a strong voice he rebuked that too hasty gallowglass, and bade the Clan-Sweeney strip him of his armour and weapons, and keep him in handlocks. Handlocks were produced so readily, it was plain that the faction of the Sons of the Knight had come to this hosting prepared to lead away prisoners or hostages. The gallow glass was deprived of his axe and sword, shelled to his tunic, handlocked, and led away by his captors, who, returning to their former place, resumed their ranks and stood like statues, awaiting further developments. The gallowglass

was not a whit crestfallen; he stood erect, towering amongst his captors, for those who stood immediately around him were only musketeers, and not men of inches. Indeed, he was under no apprehension of punishment; Owen O'Sullivan was not likely to deal hardly with such a warrior, and I rather suspect that the "coward's blow" had been enjoined by that old man who acted as Owen's adviser, and had perceived that the swagger and eloquence of the young fellow were producing an impression. Meantime Ulrick the Ready, contrary to his expectation, was leaving alive the field where his dear lord had been insulted. The captain of the insurgents called to him a black-eyed, swarthy and resolute-looking young man, who wore gilded armour, a plume to his helmet, and held a long horseman's staff in his hand.

"Con, son of Shane," he cried, bending an impressive look upon the young man, "I give thee this lad as a prisoner; lose him at thy peril."

The swarthy young man said nothing, only inclined his head respectfully in token of acquiescence. He was not a young man of many words, but his black eyes had a dangerous light in them, and spoke a great deal if one could only translate it. He was one of the few who, during the confusion, neither spoke nor moved from his place. Once somebody brushed against him, but encountered such a frown from the swarthy young man, that he sprang aside as if he had stepped on an adder.

The swarthy one now said something to a servant, who went off like an arrow from the string. He then took his place by Ulrick's side, casting

just one rapid glance at the lad, which was not a friendly glance, nor yet a quite unfriendly. A decidedly comical figure now came bustling up; it was a fat old man, with a red face and a rheumy eye. Instead of a helmet, or the fashionable broad-leafed Spanish hat and feather, he wore a conical brass cap, shaped like a stunted sugar-loaf. His iron jack, in spite of marks of recent scouring, was rusty in the crevices, and did not close over his breast, still less over his capacious stomach. The disjoined edges were ill-strapped together by leathern thongs. His green hose, yellowish with age, fitted him nowhere, were baggy at the knees, and stained—with liquor, as one might guess. He wore clumsy brogues, soled with wood and iron, though the latches were of rusty silver. The swarthy young man, on the other hand, was quite a military dandy, everything about him burnished, new, and splendid; his foot-gear particularly so, justifying the remark of Spencer that the Irish *eques* of the period went remarkably well-shod.

"What is this, son Con?—what is this?" said the old man, puffing for breath. "Why was I passed over in a matter of such moment? By Saint Gobnet! I will not endure it."

"Father," replied the young man, gently, "thou art mistaken. It is a matter far beneath thee. Lo! the parley is about to be renewed. I see the Sons of the Knight looking around, wanting thy presence. There, dear father, is thy place, amongst the chief men of the tribe."

"True, my son, true," responded the old man as with restored good humour he bustled away.

There was no heroic dignity about this old man, surely, only weak self-importance; yet the expression of his countenance was good, simple, kind, and honest. Muttering some rapid directions to the surrounding soldiers, the son presently walked leisurely after his sire. They were a singular pair. As the hurt lad is about to be conveyed a prisoner to their castle, we may meet this father and son again.

CHAPTER V.

FOOD FOR POWDER.

PRESENTLY the messenger dispatched by the severe young man returned, leading by reins of twisted straw a shaggy garran yoked to a country cart, very low, and with wheels of solid wood. A white-haired old woman, wearing a red cloak, and great linen turban, advanced before with hurried steps, striking her hands together as she came, and crying the Irish *caoine.* Still wailing, she ran to the lad who lay with his head resting in a soldier's lap, stooped down and kissed his hair many times.

"It was a coward blow," she cried, "a coward blow, *mo ghrian thu*" (my sun thou). "Oh, the blackhearted villain, to strike thee from behind and off thy guard. Oh, the black day! the black hour!"

"Hold thy tongue, O woman;" said a soldier roughly but kindly, "sure he's only a little stupid. Ulrick, I warrant thee, will eat a good supper to-night, and drink his share, and sing us one of his own songs, the darling boy, he will. See, O woman, there's one hazel eye already, and there's another. Now then, Donough Ogue, son of Donough, bear a hand, and lift the poor boy

into the car, as well as the clumsy fingers of an eighteenth cousin to O'Sullivan will let thee."

Grimly the soldier so accosted looked out at the other. His eyes glittered dangerously through the fringes of his glibb, as he answered,—

"Yes, we all know that thou art tenth cousin to the lord; we hear it often enough. But I don't mind telling thee that I am, nevertheless the better man, and that I'll prove with sword, axe, or the thrown javelin."

At this moment another soldier intervened, who was, perhaps, much nearer in kinship to the chief. At all events he seemed to have some authority over the rest. He scowled impartially at the quarrellers, and having religiously sent both their souls to the devil, first stripped the recumbent lad of his swordbelt and sword, which he handed to a bystander, and then with his own hands raised Ulrick and placed him in the straw of the cart, over which the old woman had previously thrown her red mantle.

She herself followed, and took his head in her lap, at the same time calling loudly for his hat, which a soldier held in his hand, and was eyeing curiously.

"Was the owner not a prisoner taken in war?" thought that soldier, as half-formed ideas of annexation passed through his mind.

Of the two disputers that authoritative soldier withdrew one, and sent him off the assembly. It was the angry eighteenth cousin. He carefully adjusted handlocks to Ulrick's wrists, while the crone lifted her eyes mutely to heaven at the indignity. He put the key in a leathern purse at

his girdle, called to him a second soldier, and started the procession. A peasant led the garran. The tenth cousin marched on one side of the cart with a long calyver on his shoulder and match smoking at his girdle ; a light-footed youth carrying javelins stepped along on the other side, neither wearing defensive armour, but both swords and skians or daggers. They were a blithe pair of warriors, young fellows who had seen service and who bore scars. They chatted to each other ceaselessly as they went. The javelin-man, a kerne, was barefooted, and stepped along as if he trod on air. Indeed he was also a horse-boy and accustomed to keep up with equestrians.

The old woman, who seemed to be a little afraid of that authoritative soldier, now broke forth again. Alternately she addressed to the insensible Ulrick the most endearing phrases, and language steeped in vindictiveness towards his assailant.

"Vein of my heart," she said, "thou wilt leave thy mark on him yet, darling, when thou meetest him face to face and foot to foot on the smooth ground. My sunshine, thou wilt trample yet on his proud forehead."

It was certainly hard for Irish gentlemen to practise much magnanimity or manly forgiving and forgetting, surrounded, as they were, by such a slave population, so keenly interested in their quarrels, so ready to censure or to praise.

Ulrick, who was rapidly reviving, now wished to sit up and talk, but she would not permit him.

"Lie quiet a little longer, my *calf*," she said, which was a term of endearment in Ireland as

it was in Greece when Euripides wrote his tragedies. Presently, when her anxieties about Ulrick began to abate, she addressed herself to that brace of loquacious warriors.

"I'm told, brave lads, that the Spaniards are landed. Bad luck to their yellow faces, bringing wars and troubles into the country."

"Wars and troubles, O woman" (*A bhean*), responded the tenth cousin cheerily; "there ever have been in ancient Eiriu of many heroes, and wars and troubles there ever will be, God willing, maker of all worlds. Wouldst thou have us rot for want of occupation, O foolish woman, or cross the sea and do our fighting amongst a lot of outlandish folk that never spoke a word of good Gaelic in their lives?"

So saying he patted pleasantly the butt of his calyver and stepped on more briskly. To-morrow will be as to-day, he thought, and much more abundant.

"Wouldst thou have us grow like the Sassenagh, Maury, my heart?" echoed the spear-caster from the other side. "They are all churls in the Saxon land now, barring the nobles; all traders and labourers and mechanics. Captain Fenton's boy told me so. It was when the Knight was taken captive by the great Queen, and when Captain Fenton held Dunboy for her Highness. The Captain's boy and myself had many a talk then. Let a sergeant go recruiting in Saxonland," he said, "and no one would come to him but fellows they wouldn't take for slaves in the American plantations. Every young fellow," he said, "of good inches and decent parents despises war, and

takes to some churlish occupation. Wouldst thou have us come to that, O woman ?"

"*A Dhia* (O God), I don't know, honey, but the wars are bad," replied the crone.

"Thou'lt sing another song, Maury," responded the tenth cousin. "Prick up the churl there, Donal. He's listening with his big ass's ears. Stay, churl, not so fast neither. Thou'lt sing another song, Maury, when we come back from the east land driving before us a *creacht* of cattle that will blacken the country side. Thou'lt be glad enough then to buy milchers at a shilling a head."

"*A Dhia*, lads, I'm thinking 'tis more likely every head I own will be driven off some fine morning, and a bonfire made of my bit of a sheeling. Anyway, I'm sure to have a man of war put in on me to *bonaght*, and then, it's nothing but 'Maury, the cake is burnt.' Maury, the pullet is tough.' 'Is there no water-of-life for the lord's man ?' 'Send that idle slip of a colleen for it at once, or better give me a shilling, and I'll go down myself to the ale-house'—till house, and farm, and heart are broke all together. Wars and troubles, indeed! Sure, they're sport to the like of you, men of the sword, but they're death to the like of us."

The soldiers looked across the back of the little garran at each other with a certain gay intelligence, and continued bantering the old woman, and stirring her up to new efforts of volubility.

Meantime Ulrick was so far recovered from the blow that he sat up, and authoritatively demanded an account of the whole proceedings which had ended for him in this awkward situation.

After some hesitation and beating about the bush, the soldiers told him all. Whatever his thoughts were, the young man kept them to himself, and made no comments. The manner of the soldiers to their captive was curiously significant of the prevailing condition of society. Mingled with a certain amount of respect, there was in the demeanour of the soldiers towards him a spirit of equality and camaraderie which was very noticeable. They, too, were gentlemen, free members of the clan, wearing steel at their hips.

CHAPTER VI.

ONLY A FACE AT THE WINDOW.

Our cheerful little procession now drew near to what seemed at a distance only an extensive group of old ruins, whose grey turrets and ragged edges of wall showed at many points above or between the foliage of some ill-thriven trees, all leaning to the east. A grove of bare decayed rods showed above the leafy parts, tender sprouts blasted by gales from the Atlantic. This ragged feudal strength lay beside the sea. The tide was out. On the strand, above high water mark, were many boats, some of them of great size. One, far greater than the rest, was moored in the little bay. She carried a swivel gun in the bows; it was of brass, and glittered in the sunlight.

From the castle various paths led away into the interior highlands. There women and children were seen coming and going, those who came carrying burdens. Our little *cortége*, leaving the highway, drew nigh to the fort by a *bohareen* or lane deeply scored with dry ruts and without fences. At one point the way led with a bend through a little defile cut long since in the living rock. Emerging from this, one got a first view of the interior of the building. The immediate im-

pression was a dazzling sense of pure white, startling by its suddenness, and the contrasted grey of the outer walls. It was the sheen of lime-whitened buildings in the interior, seen through a really noble gateway, massy, wide, and high, and surmounted by a gate-tower pierced with narrow windows and machicolated, though, indeed, several of the turrets were missing. Within there was a spacious courtyard or bawn against the walls of which had been built a great many cottages, long, low, and thatched. By this arrangement the labour of the builder was spared, for each cottage leaned against the wall of the courtyard. Many of these were joined together, forming a continuous building with doors at intervals; some stood detached. Two or three which were larger than the rest had glazed windows and door porches, or small verandahs, round which grew some description of creeper. All were white-washed, these last brilliantly so, and as if but yesterday. At the corners of the court were ruinous towers, circular; but at the south-east corner one of considerable size, rectangular, of a later date and far inferior masonry, the brown thatch of the roof showed curiously behind the white turrets. From the turreted battlement a basket was hung by a rope, and in the basket sat a bare-headed urchin with a brush or mop in his hand. A bucket of timber which contained lime hung beside the basket. That part of the castle wall where he was at work seemed white enough, but the sharp eye of someone in authority here had detected a fading of colour or a small stain. The rural gentry of the age enter-

tained a passion for snow-white walls. The ground of the courtyard was uneven and sloped towards the angle where this tower stood.

As the little procession entered the courtyard a great many noisy people, male and female, young and old, appeared outside the doors of the various houses. They had, however, little time to gratify their curiosity, for a cry of "the Seneschal" being raised, they all suddenly disappeared like rabbits into their holes, though still every window exhibited inquisitive faces.

A grave-looking man, with a long wand in his hand and a silver chain round his neck, now appeared from one of the cottages and stalked solemnly across the court. Just then a double window in the white tower close by where the little limer sat at ease in his basket, was flung back sharply, and in the opening was seen a female of no prepossessing appearance. Her face was long and spare, her head crowned with the great linen turban of the period, her expression fierce and ill-tempered. Her eyes seemed to lighten with some cruel joy. Ulrick, who was now standing in the courtyard, bowed respectfully towards this sinister figure, and sought, but in vain, to remove his hat from his head: his gyved hands were an impediment.

"Glad am I to see thee as thou art, O Ulrick the Ready, son of Shane," cried the lean lady from the window. "Would that every follower of the tyrant were in thy state or a worse. What does that woman here?" she cried, with greater passion, having caught sight of old Maury engaged in earnest colloquy with a great hulking churl at

one of the many doorways. "Send her away, I say; beat her, beat her."

A crowd of noisy menials at once surrounded the old woman, who, amid pushings, haulings, and pretended beatings, was speedily ejected.

To the insults of the lady, Ulrick made no reply, only blushed deeply.

CHAPTER VII.

ANGUS THE TERRIBLE.

PUSHING their way through the evictors, a pair of horsemen now rode into the yard, one of whom, halting his horse, cried in a loud voice,—

"God save all here, barring the many who are owned by the Devil."

He was a big handsome man, but ill-mounted, for he rode some sorry description of animal. He was yellow haired and bearded, with bright blue eyes, but his countenance, which was in fact handsome, was quite marred by the expression, which was that of a *roué*. His cloak was short and red, his collar limp and soiled. He wore a broad-leaved hat and dirty plume, and presented, altogether, the appearance of a seedy and rather disreputable cavalier. The other was a little hump-backed, dark, shrunken figure. Strapped to his back was a leathern satchel, which, if one might judge by its shape, seemed to contain a harp. "Ye are as sorry a pair as ever I saw with eyes," cried Jezebel from her casement. "Who art thou, O man, and what is thy business here?"

"Who am I, and what is my business here?" retorted the big equestrian. "That I will make thee to know, O Ellen of Inch, and peradventure

not to thy liking. I am Angus the Rhymer, Angus Ua Dala. There is power upon me. I am the lord of satire. Kings have trembled before me, and rig-damnas (princes) have kneeled to me for mercy. Open thy larder, then; let the best barrel run; hang pot on fire; strew fresh rushes. It is I who am here, O woman—Angus of the songs. My satire is the red wind; the hill people are in it."

The effect of this announcement, delivered with a strong declamatory voice inclining to chant, and much of it actually expressed in a familiar Gaelic metre, was remarkable. Every face blenched, and every mouth was open. Angus was known far and wide; the rumour of him was everywhere. The chieftains and men of rank and education, by whom the modern spirit was first caught, had, indeed, partially emancipated themselves from such gross forms of mediæval superstition as those upon which such men traded. Not many of them now believed in the supernatural power of satire. Nevertheless, the minor gentry, the warrior caste, and the peasantry, were still dreadfully afraid of satire when pronounced by an injured or insulted bard, and Angus O'Daly still walked the land as a terror, and satirized without mercy and on small provocation.

It was, therefore, with feelings of speechless horror that the people of Dunamark heard what their mistress now replied,—

"Thou hast come to the wrong place this time, Angus na Rann," she cried. "Let rats tremble before thee if they will. As for me, I fear neither the sword of O'Sullivan nor the tongue

of any rhymer in the land, much less thine, with thy short red cloak, and cap and feather, and, by the Hand of Him who made me, as I see, too, a sword!" Ellen of Inch here laughed loudly at her own sarcastic severity; it was not a pleasant laugh.

Yet the lady's obstreperous mirth was not without justification, The external appearance of Angus was not bardic. He had no right to wear a sword. The true bard was as helpless as a woman, and trusted to the magnanimity of others and the sacredness of his profession. The bardic character as represented in Angus had declined considerably since the four qualifications of the true bard were in old times laid down, and even strictly enjoined upon all trouveres viz. :—

> "Purity of hand bright without wounding,
> Purity of mouth without poisonous satire,
> Purity of learning without reproach,
> Purity in husbandship and amongst women."

Now, Angus of the Songs, though a finished rhymer, had, like our own Congreve and others, sought to unite the character of a man of fashion with that of poet, and fashion within the last decade or so was decidedly discarding the capacious fringed mantle, long sleeves, and other forms of mediæval Irish costume. The rhymer had gone so far in this new direction that he wore not indeed a sword, but a specially made instrument of painted and gilt timber, which looked like a scabbard and sword hilt. A superstitious fear had restrained him from taking the final

step, for no one knew better than himself that the sword was forbidden to the bard.

"Get thee hence with thy rhymes," cried the lady, "or, I swear it, thou shalt have nothing here but sore sides."

This was enough for the rhymer. The lady's voice indicated that it was no idle threat. But as he turned to leave the yard he shot back a sharp speech, which was as indicative of his own self-conceit as of his desire to hurt.

"Poor woman, thou art safe," he cried. "I deal with thy betters. If I satirize chiefs, how shall I satirize their slaves?" Then, looking round the court at the ragged walls and ruinous towers, he cried with a loud voice,—

"O Richard the Lion, O Prince of Clan Gerot, what vermin are these that defile thy wasted halls?"

As the pair rode off Angus was at first silent and meditative, then began to croon and murmur to himself, and at last broke out into chaunt:—

"O silent little robin, with drooping wings upon the bough,
Sharper is thy breast-bone than a razor!
Not even for Christ's bird of the bloody breast
Is one crumb found in Dunamark."

"That's a good verse, Diarmod. It will fly with wings over Munster."

"Too good for their sort," quoth the harper, a man of few words. "Dirt. Keep it for their betters."

And he did.

As we shall never again meet with Angus O'Daly, I may as well here mention that he was

stabbed to death as he sat at supper in O'Maher's country, by one of that chieftain's gentlemen, in revenge for a cruel satire directed against his lord.

So Angus and his little hunch-backed attendant harper rode away, leaving behind them silence and blanched faces. Ellen of Inch represented in this wild and remote region the new wine of modern enlightenment. It was, in her case, a sour and ungenial liquor, but, perhaps, had sound medicinal uses, nevertheless. She helped to emancipate her people from a barbarous intellectual thraldom, and I have observed that the prophets and prophetesses of new and true ideas are not always theselves very amiable or beautiful.

The lady did not believe in satire, and had the courage of her convictions.

CHAPTER VIII.

A LOVER'S MEDITATIONS.

At the north-west corner of the court was a ruin known as the Jackdaw Tower. Of this Tower the ground chamber was still whole, for it was vaulted with stone. The roof of that chamber was visible from the court, It was overgrown with grass and yellow weeds. Ulrick, as a little boy, had often climbed thither. In fact, he was as well acquainted with Dunamark as any schoolboy is with the country house in which he spends a summer's holidays. Ulrick was often here when a boy. He was never in the basement story of Jackdaw Tower, nor had he ever, till now, seen any one go into it. This chamber, nevertheless, was to be his prison.

The Seneschal, as soon as the excitement caused by the fierce scolding match of the lady and the rhymer had somewhat abated, led Ulrick thither. He still seemed to have misgivings as to the fitness of that place for a prison, for he fumbled deliberately amongst his keys, though he had no doubt as to the right one. Finally he unlocked the iron-clamped old door, and with some difficulty pushed it inwards, for the hinges were rusty, and the door, ill-hung, scraped on the flagged basement.

A characteristic scene occurred now. The Seneschal bade one of the soldiers fetch a *barth*

of clean straw. Now, no one of the name of O'Sullivan could be lawfully required to do anything in the nature of a menial service. The soldier was that light-footed kerne who entertained such a poor opinion of all the Saxon nation, "barring the nobles." This promising youth, having directed a saucy look at the Seneschal, strolled whistling to the door, and gave the order aloud to an indubitable churl who chanced to be passing by. Returning, he stared again at the Seneschal by way of emphasizing the lesson, with an expression of comical impertinence.

"Thou art a fool, Donal," cried the tenth cousin, "and hast a drop of bad churlish blood in thee, too, somewhere, I warrant. Too many barths of straw and hay hast thou fetched to feed and bed a horse that thou shouldst refuse now to help couch a noble gentleman, he being sore hurt in the cause of his lord."

Like many another youngster, Donal's *amour propre* happened to have been expressed just at the moment and in the way that it should not. But he was an ingenuous youth. The rough, true speech of the other disconcerted him. He felt the rebuke, frankly craved a pardon, both of Ulrick and of the Seneschal, and darted off himself for the load. Finally, Ulrick was accommodated with a straw couch and rough coverlid. The Seneschal, after some strugglings with the old door, locked it, and the captive was left to his prison meditations, and the dull pain of his stricken head.

Ulrick's situation was indeed dismal enough. He was a hostage in the hands of a fierce and deter-

mined faction, and this at a time and in a country in which not the least scruple was felt about hanging hostages. Ulrick knew very well the laws of the game of war as played in Elizabethan Ireland. One of the first serious troubles of his life had been the hanging of a dear friend—a mere child—as a forfeited hostage, whom Sir Richard Bingham President of Connaught, had hanged for the sins of his people. He knew that the first result of a hostile move on the part of his lord against the insurgents would be a message from the Son of the Knight—

"Forbear, or I shall hang Ulrick the Ready."

He knew his lord would not stop for the threat, and that he, Ulrick, would surely be "graffed." It was the slang phrase for hanging, much in use at the time.

The lad sat on a truss of straw, or walked round and round his dungeon, now whistling, now singing, anon in a low voice crooning or chanting some endless Gaelic epic about Finn and his Fianns.

The lad was a lover, too. With all his meditations and reminiscences was mingled the ever-coming vision of a pretty girlish face, with light blue eyes, golden hair, and a laughing mouth, tantalizingly scornful, yet inviting. Ever and anon he would sigh deeply and repeat a Gaelic verse, which, rendered into English, would run somewhat as follows :—

Dreaming of thee, little Sheela,
  When the stars of midnight glow,
And of thee, little Sheela,
  When gentle breezes blow;
And of thee, little Sheela,
  When falls the pale pure snow.

Then waking from the tender reverie inspired by the words, he would rage against the adorable Sheela, and again relapsing into tenderness, go over his address as before, or with clasped hands and accents of unutterable devotion, repeat a verse from one of the most passionate of the Irish love songs :—

> " Ah God, that I were the apple-tree,
> Or even the wee daisy,
> Or the rose in thy garden,
> Where thou takest thy walks alone.

Love is, I suppose, the same in all ages. This young clansman of O'Sullivan, Lord of Bere and Bantry, both outwardly and inwardly differed as much from a young gentleman of the Victorian era as the Middle Ages generally differed from the nineteenth century ; yet his feelings towards the coquette whom he loved were essentially the same as those of a youth of our own time, raging against and yet adoring the sweet troubler of his soul. In the end he lay down, and in spite of his sore head and sore heart fell fast asleep.

NOTE.—Spenser tells us that no Irish gentleman of his time would do anything that savoured of churl's work, and also that every one who could trace descent from a chief considered himself a gentleman. This, he said, all the kerne or warrior caste were able to do, owing to the skill of their ryhmers or clan-bards. Here we see one of the grand difficulties with which the Government had to contend They aimed at the conversion of the kerne into husbandman, and of such a fate the born kerne had a superstitious horror. He would rather die than become a churl. In Strafford's time, as we learn from his letters, things had not much changed. Even Dean Swift tells us of a country girl in his service who refused to carry coals because " she came of a *good old stock*." The gentle caste who were above menial service should never be forgotten in our meditations concerning the sixteenth century.

CHAPTER IX.

LOVE AND HUNGER.

ULRICK was awakened by a tremendous clattering of horses' hoofs, of hurried footsteps, and much swearing and vociferation. The master of the house and his people had returned from the hosting. The lad sat up, and, while the din lasted, entertained himself by trying to ascribe each voice to its proper owner. There was the rather reedy, plaintive voice of the master of this feudal establishment, and the clear, hard commanding voice of the son, two worthies with whom we have already made acquaintance. There was scarce a voice with which he was not acquainted. These people were his cousins, and before to-day had been his friends or friendly acquaintances. Yet, the chances were that within the next three days they would hang him without mercy. Civil war, always pitiless, was terribly so when it broke out in the midst of a tribe, and when the clan was divided against itself. The devil, indeed, had not yet broken loose, but his bonds were fast relaxing.

By degrees the uproar subsided, and peace reigned in Dunamark. "They are all at supper," thought our hero ruefully, for he was as hungry as a young eagle. He looked out through one of

the narrow windows. Without, a soldier was passing to and fro in the now dark courtyard, with a long calyver on his shoulder and his match burning. The red spark showed distinctly in the darkness. He whistled as he went—light-hearted wretch. Ulrick called to him. The soldier drew nigh.

"Did Con, son of Shane Ogue, say anything about me?"

"About thee? Yes," said the soldier, grinning as he spoke. "About thy supper, no. But cheer up, lad, I hear the Seneschal coming."

The Seneschal was coming, He unlocked the door and gave Ulrick the welcome news that he was bidden to supper. The Seneschal conducted him across the courtyard, now chequered and barred with light from many windows, and into one of the houses at the other side. The Seneschal as he entered this house tripped and fell headlong over something on the floor. The liquid rush of water which succeeded showed that it was a pail of water. Without the imprecation customary under such circumstances, he arose with dignity. This chamber was the lavatory, and was just now in great disorder, having been used by the numerous guests whom the master had brought home with him to supper. Here were many capacious wooden basins, and even two or three great bathing tubs then called *keeves*. The Seneschal unlocked Ulrick's gyves. If the lad with his hands thus free entertained a momentary thought of a rush for liberty, the hope was quenched by a glance across the courtyard. The great entrance gate was closed and barred.

Presently Ulrick, though with his hands again gyved, emerged radiant from his ablutions, his long hair wet but smooth and combed out of curl, and followed his conductor to the gr at white tower now blazing with light from every window.

CHAPTER X.

SHANE OGUE'S DINNER PARTY.

ULRICK followed the Seneschal to that tower which I have described as occupying the south-east angle of the court, that which the basket boy had been whitening and from which Ellen of Inch had harangued. The windows were now streaming with light, and the noises which proceeded from the interior indicated that festivities were in full progress there. It was a modern tower, thin-walled but of considerable size, the creation of an age in which Irish gentlemen were beginning to long for greater space in their domestic regions. It was built by the father of the reigning chieftain, a man of some education and knowledge of the big world, whose death at the hands of a "bad chief," M'Gillicuddy of the Reeks, is sorrowfully commemorated by the Four Masters.

To-night the ground floor of this building was used for culinary purposes, and, was, of course, occupied by servants and interested onlookers, for whose presence there was no necessity.

As Ulrick entered, a cook had just raised from the rack before a great blazing peat-fire a spit holding half a dozen ducks. These he slid incontinently on to a huge platter, while a rich

aroma filled the air very pleasant to our hungry young friend, Turning to the right, the Seneschal conducted Ulrick up a narrow flight of stone steps. The passage was quite dark and twisted round and round like a corkscrew. It was not strange to Ulrick, who had often gyrated up these steps. From above came a din of many cheery voices, the voices of feasters as they conversed or challenged each other to drink, the shriller voices of servants excusing themselves or indulging in mutual recriminations, loud laughter, and a mighty clattering of knives and forks.

As Ulrick ascended out of the stony corkscrew he was aware of a boy's face above him peering down into the dark. It was a handsome but wild face, the most conspicuous feature in which was a pair of unnaturally large eyes, and belonged to a lanky lad wearing a huge collar, and velvet doublet, fastened in front with silver buttons. He held a pair of shining silver snuffers in his left hand.

"Thou'rt welcome, cousin Ulrick," he cried, loud enough for the whole company to hear. "Ellen of Inch said 'No,' and my father said nothing, and Con said 'Yes,' and what Con says he means. Thou'rt right welcome, cousin Ulrick," repeated the lad, as if in defiance of authority, while at the same time he gave the captive a resounding kiss fair on the mouth. Ellen of Inch, by the way, was this hopeful youth's mother.

That shrill, loud welcome and that kiss were Ulrick's introduction to the company. At the further end of a long and crowded table sat that puffy and untidy old gentleman whom we have

already met at the field of the hosting. His large, simple face, which was mottled and purplish in the morning, and wore then a peevish expression, was now rubicund, and beamed with hospitality, good humour, and good nature. Shane Ogue was in his element. Of his pristine virtues he was at present in the exercise of almost the only one not yet destroyed by indolence and liquor and general self-indulgence. He could still play the part of a kind and warm-hearted host, if not with elegance, at least with a certain royal generosity and all-embracing good will.

His form was thrown into relief against a crimson arras which draped that end of the hall. On his left sat a priest; on his right, Ellen of Inch, resplendent now in a great Elizabethan collar and white head-gear resembling a veil thrown backwards, but exhibiting above her forehead two little peaks like a diminutive saddle or the two-fold horns of a new moon. Her demeanour and appearance had in the interim changed much for the better. She was no longer the virago; she had laid that character aside with the huge turban, and was now the gracious and hospitable lady, for indeed Ellen of Inch was no fool, nor accustomed to wear an austere countenance at feasts, and assuredly not at her own feast. Con, the severe and swarthy, eldest son of the house, sat on the other side, viz., on the master's left hand, next below the priest. He was industriously dissecting some description of fowl when Ulrick first cast his eye over the scene. The guests sat each according to his degree, in places to which they had been severally directed by the Seneschal.

None of them wore his sword or dagger. Every weapon had been first delivered over to the Seneschal, and laid up by him in a chamber reserved for the purpose. Nevertheless standing here and there against the hangings which surrounded the chamber, were several soldiers, every man with his sword drawn in his hand. They stood like statues, the lights glistening on their polished mail and bright sword blades. These men were the guardians of the feast, they obeyed not the master but the Seneschal, whose authority over them began when the master and his people sat down to eat and drink.

Ulrick walked steadily up the strewn floor. The chain of his handlocks rattled as he went. He stopped half-way in his passage up the chamber, and bowed low to Ellen of Inch and her ladies. She responded with a slight but gracious inclination—she was another person now. Moreover, someone had told her of Ulrick's manly bearing at the hosting, and Ellen was not devoid of the generous mediæval appreciation of fidelity and valour displayed in any cause.

Seeing Ulrick, her husband, to whom claret had already imparted a more than ordinary glow of external and internal warmth, cried out with a loud voice,—

"Thou'rt very welcome, cousin Ulrick. Seneschal, provide my cousin Ulrick, son of Shane, son of Randal, with a good place. He's a brave lad, gentlemen, brave and true, and a well-spoken lad to boot, a very well-spoken lad. Off with his irons, O son. *Dar mac De* (by God's Son), not a bit will I eat or a drop drink till the boy be ungyved."

The lion in Shane Ogue's mighty heart seemed now to be fully alive and awake, though the occasion was hardly commensurate with such a large oath. None could look or speak more like a man determined to be master in his own house than Shane Ogue on the present occasion.

The young man, who was the real master in this establishment, having taken the key from the Seneschal, unlocked Ulrick's handlocks and himself hanged them on the wall. He did not, however, once relax the severity of his aspect, though, he said, in a low and not unkind voice.—

"Thou art in great peril, Ulrick. Consider well whether thou wilt join the Queen's party or adhere to the Captain. Consider it well with thyself to-night. And you—! Get out of your war gear and come to supper," he added, turning to the sentinels. "Remove the prisoner when he shall have supped. You will be relieved at first cock- crow."

He drew back his tall stool to the table and resumed his carving. He carved badly to-night, and sent splashes of gravy over Ellen of Inch's beautiful tablecloth, an awkwardness which was painfully noticed by that good housewife, for household linen was much more precious in those times than in ours. The young master's personality was not pleasing, but it was certainly impressive. He was not festive or urbane, but a great deal of some description of force seemed to emanate from him. No one could contrive to forget him when he was by. A certain sentiment of apprehension ever reigned in this young man's neighbourhood, for, indeed, he was very irascible and swift to show it.

A mild, intellectual-looking youth, wearing the glibb, his long hair confined at the temples by a white silken fillet, sat next him. Between this personage and the Seneschal there passed a few words, after which the latter conducted Ulrick to his place.

The mild young man was hereditary rhymer and historian to this branch of the clan He had an estate of his own in right of his profession, churls, flocks, and herds, and a substantial thatched cottage, in which he gave good entertainment to many.

As Ulrick took his seat, those who sat near welcomed him in a frank, soldierly manner ; his right-hand neighbour piled his plate with slices of venison ; some one on his left poured him out a great tankard of dark wine.

Ulrick, to judge by his appearance, as well as by the finer and richer material of his raiment, appeared to be decidedly superior to the jolly, but rough, scions of Ares who surrounded him. This, nevertheless, was his exact genealogical position at the feast, and so prescribed for him by the bard. His place was determined by the number of generations separating him from an ancestor who had been chief. Ulrick was, in fact, sixth in descent from such a progenitor. He was not born in the purple, but he had lived near it as a page to Lady O'Sullivan, and as a lad who had lived very inwardly with the chief. He had, in fact, been well loved and cared for by both. Nor was he much spoiled by such treatment. A large spirit of equality reigned amongst the clansmen, and though there were strongly marked

differences of degree, every O'Sullivan was in his own opinion a gentleman. The lowest at this board regarded himself as a gentleman and a man of honour. Ulrick could not assume airs in such an atmosphere, even had he been so inclined, which he was not. His vanity did not take that form.

"That was a noble speech which thou deliveredst this morning, O Ulrick," said a very fat man at the other side of the table. He was large-faced, bald, and a noted wag.

"And that was a noble response you made to it," said Ulrick promptly, with a quick flash of his hazel eyes.

"Well answered, Ulrick," chorused half-a-dozen friendly voices. "Well answered, lad," "Ulrick the Ready."

"The head was so small and the words so big," replied the wag, "it was amazing."

"And the belly is so big and the service so small," cried a fresh young voice. This retort proceeded from that younger son of the house who, snuffers in hand, had welcomed Ulrick so cordially at the top of the stairs, and who at this moment happened to be engaged in his task of wick-clipping in the neighbourhood. "I once saw Shane Ogue look at it with a tear in his eye," continued the lad. "'There goes,' he thought, 'the maintenance of three gallowglasses and their boys.'" This, no doubt, was not very elegant chaff, but it fetched the simple company. So hilarious grew the neighbourhood that the great people at the upper end of the table began to look this way inquiringly.

The fat man, having first taken a large draught, wagged his bald head, and looking sadly on the younger son of the house, replied,—

"To think that in my old age I should be made a butt for a boy! Rory, lad, thou wilt be more civil when thou hast a little more hair on thy lip."

"And thou wilt be more civil when thou hast less wool on thy back," retorted the lad, a retort which was greeted with a chorus of approval from the whole room, even the military statues joining in with a great vibration of their drawn swords. Everyone saw the point of the joke. It had reference to Bald Conan, the Falstaff of the Ossianic group, a character to whom Sir Walter Scott makes frequent allusion. The boy's identification of his assailant with the notorious Conan, whose mere name awakened a hundred funny memories, was at once understood and relished, for Conan was big fat, bald, and cowardly, and the circumstances under which he became the possessor of a woolly back were perfectly well known to all there.

Nor was the general merriment so unwelcome to the fat man, who was, in fact, the almost official jester of the esablishment. But the hilarity was not to cease here. The wag, choosing this time to shoot an arrow at a fresh mark turned over a slice of venison on his platter, and remarked scornfully,—

"Lean and ill-killed. A fool's hand was at work here." But the same wrathful, boyish voice, shrill and untuned, cried at once,—

"Lean and ill-killed! Thou liest: thou liest

like—like—like a churl! This hand sent the cross-bow bolt through the middle of that stag's heart, and he was in as good grease as thyself, and that is saying a great deal."

The boy's perfectly natural attitude of indignation as he stood with snuffers projected and eyes glaring at the wretch who had dared to abuse his quarry, set the whole company laughing anew.

No one would have thought that the shadow of war hung over this festive assembly. At such primitive feasts the social tone fell naturally to the level of the rude clansmen who constituted the majority. This, no doubt, was one of the reasons which, when the opportunity presented itself, led the gentlemen, and especially the ladies, gradually to exclude their dependents from the family board. Probably sheer selfishness had much to do with this great alteration in domestic arrangements. The old custom, however, which, indeed, had a great deal to recommend it, died hard in Ireland. An old gentleman once told me that when he was a boy he dined with a great person in this neighbourhood, who every night regaled at his own table a number of wild personal followers. He sat at the head of the table. On his right sat his wife, on his left the chaplain. After these came persons of some social consideration, and then, below the salt, a mixed miscellany of wild dependents.

Some such episodes as I have described, kindling a common spirit of mirth, greatly added to the general happiness. Ever and anon the master would single out some guest by name and drink to him. Shane Ogue played the host well. It

did him good to see happy faces around him, and to feel that all this satisfaction and enjoyment proceeded from him.

Soon after Ulrick's arrival Ellen of Inch and her dowagers, followed by the other ladies, rose from the table. All the gentlemen rose at the same time; the scene was, in some respects, quite modern. While the gentlemen stood and bowed respectfully, Ellen of Inch and her ladies sailed out of the room in their stiff stomachers and tiaras and copious frilled collars, preceded according to custom by the Seneschal with his wand. Ellen of Inch's withdrawing-room was on the next floor above, approached by another dark and stony cork-screw. There that severe lady held her own council, and, we may be sure, abused well the reigning O'Sullivan. She was a kinswoman of the Lord Barry, Viscount Buttevant, the most resolutely loyal of all the great Irish nobles of the day. She had learned royalism in the Desmond wars, when her people fought for the crown and had suffered cruelly from the Geraldines. The lesson was renewed in 1601, when Tyrone, the great northern insurgent, converted the whole of the Barry territory into a smoking wilderness. For many reasons, some noble, some ignoble, Ellen of Inch, wife of Shane Ogue, of Dunamark, was a furious and implacable Royalist.

CHAPTER XI.

POLITICS.

THAT politics should now hold the field of conversation was natural and to be expected. As the feasters resumed their seats the master, who, by the way, had stood up with some difficulty during the withdrawal of the ladies, and had to be gently guided back to his throne, now fixed his eyes on a gentleman who seemed to be of some consequence, and addressed him with the air and manner of one introducing important business.

"I marvel much, I marvel much, I say, that Owen Mac an Riddera, that is to say, Owen of Carriganass, directed towards me this day a very small share of his discourse. He looked at and spoke at Con, son of Henry of Cahir-Hugh, and Brian Ogue, of Yellow Hill, and Sorley Duff, of the Glens, and hardly vouchsafed one look to me, being the man that I am in blood and power, in land and cattle, in boats and in ships, and in war-galleys, too; that is to say, one war-galley. Gentlemen, she's moored on the bay not a calyver's shot from the window. If 'tis moonlight you can see her. Rory, lad, draw the hangings and see if 'tis moonlight. Con O'Driscoll, of Baltimore, built her. Timber nine inches thick, and every

oarsman protected by iron plating. She carries a falcon, forward, that turns upon—turns upon—a—a—yes, I thank thy holiness—turns upon a swivel!" It was the clergyman who threw in the timely word.

At this point the heads of several of the retainers ducked downward, and the young master scowled like a demon. The old gentleman resumed more cheerfully, and went on straight to the end.

"Well, as you know, the last resolution is to be taken at a fresh hosting to-morrow. The question is, shall I stand by Owen, Son of the Knight? Strong as he thinks himself, I can make him or I can mar him. If we must have a new chief, I say let there be a lawful election; and if there be a lawful election, why should not I receive the suffrages of the gentlemen of this realm as well as another, seeing that in blood and power I am equal to the best, in land and followers, in cattle and jewels, in boats and ships? Gentlemen, she turns upon a swivel, and will put a hole in the best ship of war in the Queen's service—long live her gracious Highness, I say nevertheless, and every man must own his own land."

The young master, who by this time was ready to burst with vexation, now caught sight of Ulrick's face. Ulrick was looking with an amused expression at the orator, who proposed himself as a substitute for the reigning of O'Sullivan Bere.

"Father," cried the young man, "forbear for a space. These are themes upon which only friends may confer. Remove your prisoner," he cried down the long table at Ulrick's guards.

Ulrick was led away at once, and with such

precipitation that no one thought of the handlocks. When he was gone that young man proposed a fresh weeding out of the audience.

"And, father," he resumed, "there is no reason why serious matters should be debated before men of inferior rank—men who, will they nil they, must follow thy war and keep thy peace. The freehold tenants will remain and assist with their counsel, also certain gentlemen of the household." Here he indicated by name those who were to stay. "You—the rest may go."

"We are freemen and gentlemen," answered a dangerous-looking gallowglass, making no sign of rising.

"Yes, of a sort, but not to share in house-councils as of right; and, by my hand, ye shall not share in this," retorted the young master fiercely.

"I appeal to O'Daly, if it be not our right," replied the gallowglass.

Clear and distinct came now the judgment of the young bard,—

"It was your right once. That right has lapsed, I will not say how. It no longer exists. You have no right to share in house-councils."

"Where are we to go, Master Con?" said another, looking ruefully at the cheerful table glowing with wine.

"Go to hell," cried the young man, stamping with his foot; "or stay, Seneschal, roll a barrel of claret into the harness-house. Here is the key of the wine-tower. Come, pack, every mother's son of you."

Now, these freemen and gentlemen of the

lower table had not the least desire to be present at the debate. Long speeches which they but dimly understood were not a very exhilarating mode of recreation, and to the right of speech they had never put forward a claim. But there was good liquor flowing to-night, and while the men of rank made speeches they had promised them selves a strong if silent carouse. The barrel now promised by the young master restored their equanimity. They would have their carouse after all, and that, too, unrestrained by the presence of any superiors, and sing, laugh, and play at cards as they pleased in the spacious harness-room.

"Victory and blessing to the young master," they cried, flocking joyously to the entrance, "and to the old master, too."

Here, however, they gathered in a crowd, stopped by some obstacle. There was a flutter of bright raiment issuing from the stone staircase which led up from this floor to the next. In fact, the young ladies of the house were descending from the withdrawing-room on their way to their sleeping apartments in one of those whitewashed and thatched cottages with which the courtyard was surrounded. Waiting silently and respectfully there for a few minutes till the young ladies had got clear away to their night quarters, they poured down the stairway. Presently their joyful voices were distinguished coming up from the courtyard below, also the thunderous rolling of the barrel swiftly propelled from the wine-tower to the chamber of approaching festivity.

"Two, Seneschal, two, as thou art a good Christian," cried a voice entreatingly.

The young master sprang to the window and roared into the night,—

"Seneschal, as thou valuest thy neck, one only."

"The brave boys! the brave boys! Why not give the brave boys two barrels when they ask for them?" So the good-natured old master pleaded with the sterner young one, but in vain.

"One barrel," he replied, "will make them pleasantly drunk and no more. If they have a second, we could get no good out of them to-morrow. To-morrow they may have work to do;" and he added in a lower voice, "war-work."

"Ah, Con, lad, thou hast a good head on thy shoulders; God keep it there, though I have seen better staked above the battlements of Dunboy Castle." The young man's face was not pleasant to see as his father said this. "But 'tis a good head, gentlemen," continued the old man half admiringly, half apologetically; "it turns round to everything."

"Ay, father, on a swivel," replied the young man, who had some humour, though shy of showing it.

"Well, lad, that being so, charge and fire away." said the old man more gaily, "and, Rory, dear boy, see that every gentleman has his cup full."

CHAPTER XII.

THE LAND QUESTION AGAIN.

We read that the ancient Germans used to discuss public questions twice, once sober and once drunk, or rather once sober and once again in the more cheerful and hopeful light which the after dinner mood suggests. As soon as that large-eyed Ganymede had done his duty the debate was resumed by the stern young man.

"Gentlemen," said the young master, "my father just now spoke of a new chieftain and of his own claims and pretensions, which are surely very great, in case we are called upon to elect a new captain of our nation. But this is no insurrection for the replacement of one captain by another who shall be a better man, but for the destruction of the captaincy and to make this realm shire-land. Owen, Son of the Knight, will be our captain for war purposes only. He hath sworn to me and others that he will never put his foot on the stone and receive the white rod. And for myself, I swear that I will never obey or acknowledge another O'Sullivan."

"Listen to him, gentlemen," said the old man. "He is my eldest son, and my constable, and my chief adviser, and can put things before you in

the right way. I can't do it myself, but he can. I only know that it is a terrible game to go against O'Sullivan. I have seen those that tried it and their heads—Well, well, Con, I have done. Rory, my boy, go round with the wine."

"Gentlemen," continued the young master, "the question is, shall we who are his council and the heads of his people advise my father to go into action against O'Sullivan with Owen Mac an Riddera, of Carriganass? To this question I say 'yes' with all my heart and soul. I say it from no personal enmity to O'Sullivan, though you all know what I have suffered at his hands. But O'Sullivan is a tyrant, and so is everyone of the captains in the unshired territories. He governs by his own will, lawlessly, and without limit to his authority. There is not a gentleman in this territory who, while O'Sullivan lives and reigns, can say, 'I own castle, or house, or lands, hound, hawk, horse, cattle, or boats.' The rhymers tell us that in old times there were good laws which protected the clan against the chief, but the oldest man amongst us does not remember them. The chief, through his men of war, is absolute lord and master over all the territory. He puts his hawks and his hawk-boys into one house; his dogs and his dog-boys into another; his horses and his horse-boys into a third; and cesses his insolent greedy soldiers wherever he sees a house that shows signs of good living. Then, in every dispute which arises between us and those who devour and insult us, who is the judge? O'Sullivan himself, led and prompted by his chief followers, who are always around him, who are friends or kinsmen

and fosterers of the greedy swarm that devour us, or by his hired foreigners. We cannot speak save what he speaks, or do save what he allows us. Is it to be tolerated that one man, in no respect better than ourselves, should play the Turk and the Emperor over free men? As his banner goes by, every head must be uncovered. If we come into his presence we must fall on our knees, and 'my lord' him at every turn. Under the Queen's laws we will possess our lands and goods in peace. Let any man then, how strong soever, try his cuttings and spendings, and very soon the Sheriff of this shire will hale him by the ears out of his castle as readily as he will a thief out of his den in the woods. Who that has a spark of manhood left in his heart will not risk his life and all that he has when an opportunity like this is presented of ending for ever the tyranny of O'Sullivan Bere? And there is one other thing, too, the mention of which may breed greater accord. When a lion is slain the hunters get his skin. When O'Sullivan is killed or banished, his mensal lands remain for division."

As Con Mac Shane Ogue sat down a shout broke from the assembly so sudden and so fierce that there could be no doubt but that the orator had given expression to some deep and powerful, if latent, passion in the hearts of those who heard him. Many of those present had suffered unavenged wrongs at the hands of the chieftain, and especially at the hands of his numerous, haughty, and overbearing followers. Moreover, when the time comes, men, though not conscious of material wrongs, feel the stirrings of the spirit

which demands liberty as man's birth-right, liberty at no matter what cost.

> Thy spirit independence let me share,
> Lord of the lion heart and eagle eye,
> Thy steps I follow with my bosom bare,
> Nor heed the storm that howls along the sky.

In the shout that greeted Con's harangue there was nothing in the least resembling such cheers as we moderns are accustomed to hear when an orator gives apt expression to the feelings of his audience. It was short, passionate, and piercing—a cry, a scream rather than a shout. There was war in it, but not such war as we know now. The war-god, as these men knew him, had the heart of a tiger, and his eye did not spare children.

Shane Ogue was the first to break silence. While his son spoke, his rheumy eyes kindled. The iron of the territorial tyranny had entered into his soul too. But the angry light soon died away. He shook his head sadly.

"Alas! son Con," said he, "I have heard that speech before; more than once I have heard it. That speech, my lad, I made myself. It was in the great hall of Ardee Castle on the Bay of Kenamarra. I could speak then, Con; I had a tongue for speech, and a hand for war. We, a third part of the nobles and gentlemen of the territory, confederated against Dermot, son of Donald, the same who chased and captured the Qneen's frigate and hanged captain and crew, and rowed back with pomp and pipings to Dunboy. And we said as we say now that the great Queen was

with us. And I saw the end of it, too, lad; for O'Sullivan descended on us like an eagle upon partridges, and pursued us as the hound pursues the hare, and scattered us as the wind scatters the foam."

"Father," cried the young man, rising once more, his voice shaken with passion. "Father, this is no matter to be handled with rhymers' phrases, nor is the action of brave men risen to-day against tyrants to be governed by experiences fetched from old time. What was seen to be prudent once is not always prudent. The prudence of yesterday is the folly of to-day, and new times bring new counsels. God himself goes forth throughout this land against the tyrants. For our sins He suffered us to be their slaves and victims so long, but not for ever. I saw Gerot Fitz Shamus, the Earl of all Desmond, high and mighty, sit in his hall of judgment and sentence to the rope noblemen and gentlemen who did no other wrong than resist his cuttings and cosherings. I saw him, like a Sultan, with his proud guard around him, drunk with his tyranny and pride, while the people trembled, and gentlemen of ancient lineage prostrated themselves before his chair. I saw him ride through the great Gate of Kilmallock with five hundred gentlemen around him, and the people kneeling as he went through the streets. Where is the Earl of Desmond to-day? Where is the Sugane Earl, his base counterfeit who trusted to the sword of Tyrone? Where is M'Cartie More, whom we worshipped like a god? Where is M'Cartie Reagh and M'Cartie of Muskerry? Are these ruled subjects the lawless cap-

tains whom we have known? The northern Geraldine is gone, and the sourthern Geraldine is gone. The Butler is no longer king in Tipperary, nor Barry More over the children of Robin. The captains and their ministers of wrong, *they* are the partridges and the hares and the foam of the sea. The eagles are out against them and the hounds are on their traces, and the wind sweeps them away. Will the tyranny of O'Sullivan endure in times like these? Will Donald the Piper lift up his forehead against our Queen and prevail, he and his yellow runagates of Espàn? His betters tried it, and were plucked up by the roots, and the plough went over their place."

CHAPTER XIII.

A POWERFUL PRIEST.

WHO amongst those that sat around Shane Ogue would have spoken next I cannot tell, for hardly had Con reached the conclusion of his boisterous harangue when a voice, clear as a silver bell, sounded from the extreme end of the chamber. The accents were so strange, so suggestive of worlds in which these men had never moved, that all turned round with a start and listened wide-eyed, nay, some of them open-mouthed. "Shane Ogue," the voice said, "and you, gentlemen of the manor of Dunamark."

In the quarter to which all eyes had turned with astonishment and even alarm a singular figure had arisen, like an apparition, upon the astounded assembly. It was a tall monk in the habiliments of his order. His black eyes glowed under a white and nobly-formed brow. His face was thin and pale, the features delicate, yet pronounced. He was of middle age, but the fringe of hair which showed beneath the tonsure was black.

As the guests turned to look, someone said "Archer—James Archer, the Jesuit," at which words a tremor of interest, also of excitement, and even fear, seemed to shake the assembly.

It was indeed the famous *Pater Archerus*, the

great Papal emissary who alone was worth armies to the rebel cause. Few knew whence he came or whither he went; men knew only that his purpose was to overthrow in Ireland the Queen's Government, and, by one method or another, re-establish Papal authority in all its former power and splendour. One night he was the honoured guest of the noblest in the land, the next he sat by a peasant's hearth, perhaps on the third in a cave or some thick woody covert, cowering low before sheriffs and seneschals. He was oft seen on the edge of battle with the sword in one hand and the crucifix in the other. He was seen in the councils of the insurgent chieftains composing differences, quelling feuds, softening the mutual asperities of those proud, jealous, and intractable potentates. Tyrone's and Hugh Roe's names were hardly oftener on men's lips than Archer's in this wild time. He went through the land like night. He came, with gold, and promises, and burning eloquence, and in his heart the wisdom of the serpent and unquenchable fire. He suggested supernatural power. To one of the two great parties between which the realm was torn he seemed an angel or a prophet; to the other an incarnation of the evil one.

Shane Ogue was visibly alarmed, as his eyes lighted on this strange apparition. Archer was come to rebuke him: that he knew. Partly with the silly notion of placating this offended being, partly from long habits of hospitality and flowing kindness and good will to all who came under his roof, he interrupted the just begun speech, and cried across the chamber:—

"James Archer, for such I deem thee, before telling thy message, whatever it may be, thou must first have supper, for thou seemest like one who has travelled. The best supper that Dunamark can yield will be got ready for thee, for the house-supper is ended, and my sons, Con and Rory, will themselves wait on thee. Whether the supper will be to thy liking I cannot say, but we can give thee good wine, white wine, not too strong, for they say thou canst not bear strong drink. We had it but ere yesterday out of a French fishing-smack from Rochelle, the 'Santa Theresa,' captain and owner of the same Denis O'Driscoll, son of Brian, son of Teigue Ogue, son of Teigue More, son of O'Driscoll of Castlehaven, for my father's sister—Yes, Con, I hear; I'll—I'll be done presently—married—S'wounds; I forget whom she married, but Denis brought the wine ere yesterday, and thou shalt drink it to-night—and thou art very welcome, James Archer, to Dunamark."

"I will not eat or drink," replied the Jesuit, "nor, though weary with journeying, will I rest or sit in the house of one who is confederate with heretics. O'Sullivan, like a true son of the Church, is arming in support of the Action, and as an ally to the King of Spain, whose lieutenant, Don Juan de Aquila, has arrived, bringing troops and gold. Arms, too, in abundance are on the sea, and will soon be here, and more soldiers. Ere the dawning of Christ's own day there will not be a city or a territory held for the excommunicated Queen in all Ireland, and a dreadful vengeance will be taken upon those who side with the heretics, or who waver at all, if for an instant, in this crisis.

In this world you will suffer all that the secular arm may inflict, and in the next you shall endure eternal damnation. Rise up, Shane Ogue, with thy men of war and thy people and thy substance, and fly this night westward to O'Sullivan. Go in thy boats ; go swiftly, for the Queen's people, even the Sons of the Knight and their gunmen and swordmen have beset all passages."

"Con, lad," whispered the old man to his son, "this is too terrible. Yes, we may be on the losing side. The loser pays ; that's an old law. I have seen losers pay, in my time. What shall we say ? What shall we do ? Drink only one cup, James Archer ; it is not too strong."

So the old man quavered and stammered, being greatly confused and alarmed. Most of the faces at the table were now pale and many mouths gaping. The voice of Archer was like a voice out of the other world ; visions of temporal and eternal destruction flitted through men's minds.

Before the Jesuit could reply, if indeed he would have replied at all to Shane Ogue's ineptitudes, Con was on his feet.

"But that thou already standest," he cried, "I, too, would bid *thee* to *rise* up and flee. Who art thou that darest to come between subjects and their lawful Sovereign, and pretendest to stir up rebellion, sedition and civil war in our country ?"

"I come," answered the Jesuit, "by the authority of the Holy Father to stamp out heresy and break the yoke of a tyrant, who is, at the same time, a foreigner and a heretic, and the chief champion of the apostates this day in all the world."

"Thou art thyself," answered Con, "a foreigner, an Englishman, and our Gaelic speech sits uneasy on thy tongue. And thou wouldst bring upon us a foreign dominion, the dominion of the Spaniard, compared with which the Government of our Queen is like the Government of ourselves. If the Queen is a foreigner, the nobles and gentlemen of Ireland have many times accepted her sovereignty by every form and ceremony known, and not through force, but willingly. If she be a heretic, her yoke is light. There is a yoke that galls our necks like burning fire, and that yoke, with her assistance, we have sworn to break. Her yoke is light where it falls heaviest; even in matters of religion, it is light and easy to be borne."

As the young man ceased speaking, and ere the Jesuit could reply, the priest stood up at the master's right hand. He was a handsome man, of a fine commanding presence, with a firm, masculine face, not unrefined, yet quite a carnal type in comparison with the purity and intellectuality which shone from the countenance of the Jesuit who stood still in his place, surveying the scene like one who had yet much upon his mind unsaid.

"This about religion and the heretic Queen concerns me," said the priest. "James Archer, thou knowest well what I am about to say, but nevertheless I will say it. The heretical Queen permits us the free exercise of our religion provided we do not celebrate the Mass in public. Wherever her laws extend or her officers bear sway this rule prevaileth. We are assured that

she would grant us this last favour too but for considerations nearly touching the security of her throne. Therefore this minution of our full rights as free men is no wrong, or, if it is, it is one that loyal subjects will easily bear who know the Queen's gracious disposition. All the rites of the Holy Catholic Church may be freely used in this land, provided that there be no open and ostentatious breach of the laws. I think, O Jesuit, that in lands where thy order bears sway heretics cannot boast such liberty. Thou claimest authority from his Holiness to raise rebellion in this land. We recognise no such authority. In matters not concerned with faith and doctrine let him govern his subjects, not us. We allow in him no authority to direct us how we shall bear ourselves in civil matters. That is tyranny, and we will have no tyrants. O'Sullivan we will overthrow, and the Spaniard we will expel, and thee, O Archer, with thy pretended spiritual authority, we defy." The speaker was Sir Turlough O'Driscoll, cousin-german of Sir Fineen of Baltimore.

While the priest spoke the Jesuit observed him with a severe look and kindling eye.

"I think," he began, "that thou art one who loveth a fat mess, and to drink well, and sit at a rich man's table better than aught that concerns the spiritual welfare of thyself and thy flock."

At this moment Con's young brother Rory ran up to him and whispered in his ear: "Ellen of Inch says that thou must stop the Jesuit's mouth."

"Tell Ellen of Inch that my father and myself will do what seems to ourselves right and prudent,"

he said sternly, glancing as he spoke to the entrance of the chamber. There, as he suspected, a flutter of feminine attire showed from the narrow staircase which led thence to the withdrawing-chamber. His mother and her friends were evidently on the staircase assisting, so far silently, in the deliberations of this primitive parliament.

"Archer," he said, "A truce to these matters ecclesiastical, by which we men of war are not wont to be affected, and yet in my poor judgment my father's spiritual adviser hath spoken well and to the point. *Rem acu vere tetigit.* I will put to thee one question. Dost thou absolve soldiers from their military oaths?"

"I will first ask thee," replied the Jesuit, slightly changing his position, "what gives sanctity to an oath?"

"A man's manhood, I think," replied the other with a sonorous emphasis. "But I am not learned in casuistry. Shuffle not, O Jesuit. Shuffling and denial will avail not. I have spoken with those whom thou hast absolved from their military oaths after they had received the pay and the meat and the drink of those who hired them, full *bonaght*, according to contract. Again, I ask whether it be thy teaching that faith is not to be kept with heretics, and wait for no answer; for, if thou deniest, I tell thee to thy face that the truth is not in thy mouth. Now, mark this, O Jesuit. We Irish gentlemen and men of war, though we may seem to you Rome-running folk to be a very simple race of men, are not so simple as to regard those who teach

perfidy with awe. From of old we have preserved traditions of honour and gentlemanly behaviour fetched from many illustrious examples preserved in our ancient histories of men who lost realms and lives willingly rather than break their word once passed. To thy face I tell thee thou art a corruption in this land. The breath of thee brings shame on the noble and dishonour on the brave. Thou wert with O'Moore, Owney, son of Rory Ogue, when he parleyed with Black Thomas, the Butler; and O'Moore, thou being by, took captive the Earl, contrary to all honourable custom of war, and it is well known that it was by thy counsel and approvement he dishonoured himself and his noble house by that vile act."

"I speak to the master of the house, young man, not to thee," replied the Jesuit, showing evident signs of irritation. He would have gone on, for he had quickly perceived that the simple-minded host was much influenced by his former speech. But Con would not permit him.

"The master of the house," he said, "relishes as little as I do the presence of a man who will teach his soldiers to betray him."

"What is this, lad? What would this Jesuit fellow teach?" cried Shane Ogue.

"Bad doctrine, father. That a soldier may break his word to the gentleman whom he has sworn to serve faithfully."

"God's wounds, lad, sayest thou so?" he cried, passions incidental to his feudal and patriarchal place showing strongly on his countenance as he spoke. Also, it is true, the light but not too

strong wine brought over in the Rochellese smack contributed withal to his rising fury.

"Now, by the Almighty God, Maker of all worlds, were it not for the habit he wears this fellow should be *graffed* before an hour. To come corrupting my people under my very nose with his sweet words and solemn jaws, and o'er-religious refusal to eat my meat and drink my wine. Doth he rely on O'Sullivan? What care I for O'Sullivan? Not these dregs." As he spoke he emptied his cup with a sudden motion over his left shoulder. "I am man to the Queen. I care not who knows it, and will rise out for the Queen's O'Sullivan."

The shout that greeted this announcement, especially on the part of the younger men, convinced the Jesuit that with such fierce partizanship amongst the followers, and such a simple-witted and facile master evidently quite under his eldest son's government, nothing could be really effected in Dunamark.

He turned to leave, but as he turned raised his right hand solemnly. Con, however, was determined that he should not be heard.

"Not another word shalt thou speak in this hall," he cried. "Go thou shalt, and forthwith, and lest thou shouldst seek to pervert any other of Owen Ogue's confederates, a trusty guard will conduct thee safe over the mearings into O'Donovan's country. Brian MacRandal, take with thee three calyver men and never leave the Jesuit till he is beyond the mearings of O'Sullivan's country. Enter into no conversation with him. At the peril of thy life transgress this order."

The soldier so accosted rose and beckoned to three others who sat at the same table. All four followed the retreating Jesuit. Con, too, followed, designing to keep his eye on this dangerous personage to the last. As he passed the stairway leading upwards, he said in a low, but stern voice, "Mother, go back, this is no place for women."

In the kitchen were some score of wild-looking rustics, each with a big mug of beer by his side or in his hand, seated on stools round the fire. Ranged against the wall stood many hand-barrows, each tilted on end. Con smiled queerly as he looked upon the instruments of husbandry. The wild rustics were the servants of certain gentlemen now upstairs, gentlemen who were known to experience some difficulty in finding their way home from convivial meetings. In the yard a bare-headed, bare-footed boy held a pony by the bridle. It was the Jesuit's. While his men were accoutring themselves with their war-gear in the arms-room, Con stood by the Jesuit like a statue. Neither addressed the other.

The soldiers now approached, their helmets and weapons shining in the light of torches made of bogwood splinters. The flame and smoke went up straight into the still, dark night. James Archer sprang into the saddle, needing no assistance. Though a Jesuit, he was as competent an equestrian as any man at Dunamark this night. One soldier took the pony by the bridle, relieving the horse-boy of that duty. The great gates of the courtyard were flung back, grating on their iron hinges, and the Jesuit Archer and his guard fared forth into the night. In perfect silence they

marched till in the hills between Bantry and Drimoleague they saw far away a light burning. It was a light in the warder's chamber of O'Donovan's Castle, sole strength of a small mountain clan. His guard left him without a word of salutation, and the Jesuit with his horse-boy went on to O'Donovan's highland castle. Thence he went through all West Cork diligently sowing the seed which at Dunamark fell upon such very stony ground. Like that sown by Perseus, this seed too ere long sprang up in the shape of armed men. Many castles he visited, and in many received some such rebuff as he had experienced in Dunamark; yet he persisted. Here, however, we too as well as Brian Mac Randal must part with this singular figure.

CHAPTER XIV.

OUT OF THE JAWS OF DEATH.

It was, of course, quite dark when Ulrick returned to his prison, but the good-natured sentinel procured for him a little wooden cup of oil, and a half-peeled rush—the common primitive rush-light of which we have all heard but which so few of us have seen.

"Your honour will find company in the light," said the good-natured soldier, feeling that the brave young fellow was unhappy and lonely.

Ulrick lay down on his rude couch, supporting his head upon his left hand, and watched the little smoky flame with its big red tongue and illuminated oil, revolving many things. He heard the soldiers trooping joyously into the courtyard and the metallic noise made by the opening of the door of the wine-tower, also the young master's angry voice cleaving the night, sternly restricting "the brave boys" to one barrel. Then he overheard a fragment of conversation between two of Shane Ogue's people who chanced to stroll near his prison.

"What is the use of all this jaw-practice? We must be in the action with the Son of the Knight. I know Owen Mac an Riddera. He

would harry us to Hell if we did not. He is near, and O'Sullivan is far."

"But we might shift over the mearings."

"I think thou'rt a natural. As sure as thou standest there, Mac an Riddera is encamped on the field of the hosting, and his men range the hills."

"Will Ulrick the Ready be a tie on O'Sullivan?"

"A tie? No more than a spancel of thread on the fetlocks of a chief horse."

"That is a pity."

"Well, it is."

"We'll just say a kind word to the crayture."

"Stand back there you," roared a voice from the other side of the court, followed by the clicking of the wheel-lock of a snaphance, "or, by the hand of O'Sullivan, I'll send a bullet through you."

It came from the friendly musketeer of the rush-light, who had so far yielded to temptation as to step over and get a draught out of the just-opened wine barrel, and who now came running back.

The sympathetic ones vanished forthwith.

In the harness-room round their wine-barrel, "the men of war and gentlemen" were evidently enjoying themselves. At first the music was confined to the pipers, who squealed forth marches, gathering tunes, and divers lost warlike melodies. By various signs Ulrick not long after perceived that the "gentlemen" were deep in cards. Subsequently the pipes, and cards, too, were suppressed as too slow an entertainment, and song succeeded Irish song, all voices joining. What the singing wanted as music it made up in

strength and volume. In remote kennels the hounds took up the burden, subtile chords having been struck in their sympathetic souls, and bayed and wailed lugubriously. All this time, too, there was a considerable clamour and din of scolding, hurrying servantdom doing what it would be hard to tell. In such a mediæval *ménage* the servants were usually numerous out of all proportion to the work.

Several times Ulrick heard a strong voice cry—

"Who, and thy errand?"

It was the voice of the porter, who from his chamber above the gateway challenged those who begged entrance.

Once he heard the reply,—

"Sure we're Cathal Rour's men (i.e. Fat Cathal) with his barrow, and a strong one it is, and well we know the reason why. Honey, we do."

Ulrick laughed. He thought of Cathal Rour, happy but incapable, carried home at a sling-trot by his big serfs.

"How is it," he thought, "that these wretched, slavish fellows always seem so merry? Their fun is at least funnier than ours." But he made no attempt to solve the question, being nothing of a social philosopher.

Like a strong, monotonous base to all these various and blended noises he heard, though without distinguishing the words, the strong haranguing of the young master, and started at the passionate response which two or three times greeted it.

"Yes," he thought, "now they are pouring

forth their insults against my dear lord. Terrible will be their awakening from their fools' dreams, and dire the vengeance which my lord will exact upon them. O my dear lord, my dear and noble lord, I shall never see thee any more, nor my sweet mistress and mother. I mind, when I was knighted, how O'Sullivan buckled on my sword with his own kingly hands and kissed me, and how she, Lady O'Sullivan, said: 'I have no sword to give thee, Ulrick, but I will kiss thee, and thou art my knight too.' And Dunboy, with its turrets and mighty walls, proud and strong, a mailed giant with his foot in the sea, washed by waves, O, home of the brave, and nest of eagles, I shall never see thee any more."

So the lad mused while the tears gathered in his eyes. Then he heard the great folding-doors of the main entrance grate on their hinges, from which he argued the arrival of horsemen. Those admitted, so far, had entered by a barred wicket fixed in one of the leaves. Scarcely had the horseman, whoever he was, entered, when a strange silence pervaded the courtyard. Ulrick had to shift some of his straw couch to the other side of the chamber in order to be able to look through the loophole, for, as I mentioned before, he was not of great stature. When eventually he did bring his eyes on a level with the scene without he saw a tall man descending from a bay pony in the midst of a crowd, many of whom held up torches in their hands. Though Ulrick did not see his face he knew at once that it was the famous Jesuit. He had once been present at an angry scene in the great hall at Dunboy

Castle. It was when Tyrone in 1601 had descended with great power into Munster, and when the Lord Barry and Ulrick's own lord, O'Sullivan Bere, alone of the Southern nobles stood by the Queen in that storm. Archer had then held over O'Sullivan's head terrible threats just as he was about to do to-night over O'Sullivan's vassals, and O'Sullivan had answered him much in the same manner and in the same spirit as Con was about to answer him to-night. The politics of the sixteenth century were just as liable as our own to sudden and unexpected changes. Ulrick remade his couch, and again lay contemplating the friendly little rushlight—the only friend left to him. He had taken care that his light should not go out. The soldier had left him a little bundle of rushes which Ulrick amused himself by peeling. As one of these primitive lamp wicks burned down he substituted another. At last, after nodding for some time, he fell fairly asleep. First cock-crow had been lustily delivered by some clarion-voiced cock. The soldier on guard had slunk to his couch, and his place been taken by another martial armadillo as like him as one mailed lobster resembles another. Shortly after this Ulrick awoke with a sharp cry. He had been dreaming. He dreamed that his lord and the Queen as allies had fought and won a great victory over Tyrone, in which Elizabeth, like Boadicea or Queen Meave, fought from a war-chariot, wearing shield and helmet, and hurling spears into the press of battle, his own lord, O'Sullivan Bere being captain of her host.

Tyrone fled out of the battle into his great

castle at Dungannon. He (Ulrick) came flying or swooping down upon the battlements, after him, but heard below him unearthly growlings, as of an army of bears, and below that again subterranean thunderings, and the castle battlements as if shaken by a mighty earthquake, tossing him to and fro, from turret to roof and from roof to chimney-top.

He awoke trembling with fear, his eyes starting from their sockets and his mouth gaping. The little rush was still burning. He saw nothing, but heard something that added fresh sharpness to his terror. It was a loud whisper, coming as if from beneath the ground.

"Master Ulrick, Master Ulrick. Glory be to God! but 'tis he's the sound sleeper."

Simultaneously he felt himself lifted up from beneath, as if the ground itself had taken life.

Overcome with supernatural terror, he uttered something between a scream and an ejaculation, of which he repented almost at the moment it passed his lips, for his mind quickly realised the true nature of the situation.

"What is it?" said the soldier, approaching the door.

Ulrick was silent. He could not tell the truth, and never yet had a lie passed his lips.

"What's that?" cried a loud voice.

It was the voice of the young master from the big tower. He and two or three others had sat up till now seriously canvassing the situation, arranging plans, and discussing probabilities.

"'Tis the prisoner, master," answered the soldier. "Bad dreams I'm thinking he has had."

"Well he might," said the questioner, as he withdrew his head and slammed the lattice to.

Meantime the subterranean noise had ceased, though the agitation of his couch, lifted from beneath, continued. Gently Ulrick removed the rug and straw. One of the flags with which the dungeon was floored was in motion, and lifted somewhat beyond the floor level.

Groping over the surface of this, he found, as he had expected, an indentation, into which he could insert his fingers and secure such a purchase as enabled him, with the assistance from beneath, to lift the whole flag on end. He turned it over and let it fall softly upon the straw. No word was spoken. Ulrick let himself down into the aperture. His feet touched earth immediately; earth, however, that sloped obliquely downwards and northwards.

His mysterious visitant was already departing along the narrow tunnel.

Falling on hands and knees, Ulrick groped his way after, taking care to keep as close as possible to the person before him. After a while, he became aware that the passage which at first sloped downwards, and then seemed to advance horizontally, now sloped upwards.

Finally, he saw a faint light, which grew more and more decided, till at last Ulrick, following close at the heels of his predecessor, clambered into the open air. The mouth of this passage was surounded by fresh dug earth amid which lay a spade shining in the moonlight. All around was a furze-brake.

As Ulrick looked around him he recognized the spot.

"Why, this is Deadman's Corner," said he.

"Yes, sir, that's what 'tis called," replied his companion, a young rustic, and the same with whom the old woman had had a short colloquy on the previous day just before she was driven from the courtyard by the termagant mistress who seemed to have had some strong reason for disliking her.

"Thou'rt a brave lad," said Ulrick, contemplating his liberator admiringly. He was a big and brawny young rustic, though simple-looking and sheepish. "Thou'rt a right brave lad?"

The rustic showed no sign of gratification at the epithet.

"No, indeed, sir, not much of that," he answered. "It was my mother. She's harder than iron when she takes a notion in her head, and she swore that she'd sell me to the Spaniards to row my life out in their galleys, and that was why I did it, barring one thing else." Here he looked away shyly. They were now walking up the highlands which lay behind the castle. Indeed, whether from constitutional intrepidity or mere forgetfulness, Ulrick, emerging from the tunnel, made no effort at concealing himself, but strode forward as erect as if he were within whistling distance of Dunboy.

"And what was that?" he asked.

"Your honour, I can't rightly tell, but it is a custom with me to be thinking about your honour ever since your honour was a little boy, cessed on my mother by the lord when he was in action, and I never spoke to your honour—only kept looking."

Ulrick started at this curious confession of personal attachment. After a pause he said,—

"Be a soldier. I have heard that some churls handle a calyver well and bravely. O'Sullivan will make thee a soldier for my sake."

"O sir," replied the rustic, shifting his position uneasily, "I tremble at the sight of a gun. Sir, don't ask me for to do it. I never heard that any of my father's people or my mother's people were noble" (*uasal*—free, gentle, bearing arms). "No one ever expected the likes of us to die anyway except aisy and on straw."

"Well, well, no doubt. The hare is not a hound, nor the pigeon a hawk."

"No, sir," more cheerfully. The poor fellow was really brave enough, and would doubtless have made a fine soldier had some passing captain pressed him into service and brought out his warlike aptitudes. These churls who were so utterly despised by the warrior caste were in fact, the descendants of a class once powerful and warlike enough, and of the same blood with their conquerors. War's iron dice fell unkind, that was all.

"There's another thing, sir," added he, "that I must not forget. 'Twas the old master that told my mother the secret road underground. It was before she married my father. And she says to me, 'Denny,' says she, 'thy end will come quick and bloody if thou say'st a word about that road to living man;' and she told me to get thy promise, never to mention the same to any Christian soul."

"Yes," said Ulrick at once, "I give my word that I will tell no one. Now, farewell."

Ulrick at first thought of taking the rustic

with him, but on second thoughts concluded that such a self-confessed poltroon would be a dangerous encumbrance.

"God have thee in His keeping, Master Ulrick," said the rustic.

"I wish He would send me a sword," said Ulrick.

"And mind Owen Ogue's people," said the other. "The boundary is watched."

The rustic went straight back, doubtless to cover up that entrance of the tunnel.

CHAPTER XV.

A SAUCY CHURL.

FROM a neighbouring elevation Ulrick, turning, stood and contemplated Dunamark, whose white buildings shone in the pale moonlight. Far out-topping the rest rose the tower in which he had supped; lights were still burning there. Against its brown sloping thatch the white turrets of the parapet showed clear and distinct. He could see down into the courtyard. There was the sentinel with his matchlock on his shoulder, in front of the now empty Jackdaw Tower, pacing to and fro, he and his shadow, the dull spark of his match glowing, and then hidden, as the sentry paced towards him or away from him. Half the courtyard was in shadow, the other half in bright moonlight, for the moon had risen late and was still in the east. All things looked peaceful and serene. Not a breath of air was stirring: the only audible sound was the low monotone of the sea rolling slumberously on the shore beneath. The feeling in Ulrick's heart as he looked was not anger but pity. Nothing had yet occurred to arouse in him the latent but terrible passions involved in fratricidal war. Foolishly these people had determined to rebel

against their lord, and they would rue it; and Ulrick's anticipations or forebodings were fulfilled. Three nights after this, O'Sullivan's men surprised nd stabbed the sentinels, came pouring over the bawnyard, and through the opened gate, and there was a murder grim and great in Dunamark. Dunamark was fired, and every soul within the circuit of its walls was slain or burned. For once again the dynast triumphed over his rebellious vassals. O'Sullivan descended upon them like an eagle upon partridges, and hunted them as the hound hunts the hare, and harried them as the wind harries the foam of the sea. The old man was a true seer; yet the young man was right too. There were eagles abroad before whom Ulrick's lord was forced to flee.

Ulrick now stepped westward as fast as he could go, taking care to keep at a good distance from the road. When he saw afar off the fires which indicated the camp of the sons of Owen he struck still further to the north and into the mountains. Anything like a cordon of soldiers stretching from sea to sea across the promontory he guessed to be impossible. The insurgents could not expect to prevent individuals from escaping into O'Sullivan's country. What was possible was to beset all ways and passes so that cattle, carts, and horses could not be driven from the insurgent country into that of the chieftain. He knew well the mountains above Glengariffe. Thither by direction of the chieftain he had been accustomed to come every summer to reap, as it were, the annual crop of eyases. It was one of the lord's sources of revenue, and

a considerable one. Woe to the gentleman or plebeian who, without leave from the lord, dared touch a hawk's nest in those days. It was for meddling with this "regality" that Con, "the young master," had suffered the injury to which we have heard him referring in his speech. A portion of his father's estate ran up into these mountains, and the young man had dared to take, on his father's land, the young of one falcon's nest. Under the chief's signed warrant O'Sullivan's sergeant took Con prisoner and marched him in handlocks to Dunboy. There he was kept a close prisoner till his father had paid a great fine. The harvestless sea and harvestless mountains alike contributed to the well-filled exchequer of this chieftain. For from the sea, too, he reaped in the form of dues exacted from French and Spanish fishermen, a great revenue. Good reason had O'Sullivan to dread the advance of the Queen's laws and the Queen's executive into his principality.

Over these familiar hills, traversed in our time by the high road which leads from Glengariffe to Kenmare, O'Sullivan's faithful clansman and cousin made his way, now climbing, now walking, but never resting. It was growing towards dawn when he descended from the high broken ground on the west of Glengariffe. Striking the main road there, he strode forward rapidly. He was hatless indeed, and his crimson short cloak was covered with earthy stains and muddy patches, but what cared he? He was free and on his way to that "home of the brave and nest of eagles" to which he had so mournfully bade adieu but a few hours

since, and his enemies were now a full league in the rear. Loud and clear now rose the young man's whistle, like the song of a bird escaped from the cage. He pulled up a crag-hazel that grew by the wayside and dressed it as he went along. It was a churlish substitute indeed for his good steel blade, but it was something. Signs of returning day began now to appear. Here and there smoke went up from peasants' huts on the hill-side, and bare-footed girls were seen stepping afield with their pails. Turning an angle of the narrow road Ulrick met the first wayfarer whom he had yet encountered. It was a young and powerful-looking countryman leading by the bridle a garran with straddle and baskets, the latter filled with sand. He was an industrious wight, seemingly, up and out early, bringing a load of sand from the sea-shore to his boggy upland farm. A modern man would have been pleased at the sight, for industry is now reckoned as a highly commendable thing. Has not Walt Whitman come out as the bard of all toilers and moilers ? To Ulrick it was not indeed a vice when exhibited by a clown. It was a servile quality, that was all. This big-limbed young countryman wore the once national glibb, a personal adornment, however, which was now growing unfashionable, though still worn by Ulrick and many others, and long, matted, coarse, black hair tumbling over his shoulders. His tunic was tight-fitting and open at the breast, and terminated in a many-plaited petticoat. Woollen hose, close-fitting, encased his strong legs. He tramped heavily forward in wooden

clogs beside his garran, and in his right hand held a particularly dangerous-looking, massy blackthorn. The fellow came straight along the way to within a few feet of Ulrick, who suddenly drew up, and straddled across the little road looking as imperious and menacing as an offended prince, with an angry light in his eyes.

"Clear the way, O churl (*Fág an bealach, a bhodaigh*)," he cried, in a tone and voice sufficiently full of meaning.

"Clear the way thyself (*Fág an bealach tu-sa*)," growled the other, his eyes glittering dangerously through his tangled glibb, and pressing up to the young clansman without a pause. Scarcely were the words out of his mouth when a howl or scream reverberated from the rocks around, and the herculean churl sprang back with his hand to his face. Ulrick, with a sudden motion scarcely visible, had struck him back-handed along the left cheek.

"Thou vile churl," cried the lad. "I shall teach thee to know a descendant of O'Sullivan."

For a moment the countryman seemed as if about to engage in mortal combat with his small assailant. Had he done so, this story would certainly have come here to a sudden end. Clutching his stick, he made an angry step or two forwards, the blow which he had just received showing like a streak of blood across his face, which was otherwise white with passion. But his courage only lasted for a moment. The attitude of the young patrician, the slavish habits engendered by centuries of oppression, and all that he had ever heard or seen of the consequences

to those who dared raise a hand to a member of the dominant tribe, restrained that rustic, strong and brave as he was. He stood still for a moment, then suddenly adopting a new resolution, flung away his stick, and, strange to relate, he, with his red weal, kneeled upon the road before the haughty *duine-uasal.*

"Sir, forgive me," he cried. "Don't tell of me, sir; Black Sheela saw never one of my breed before. Pity me, your highness, and my wife and two small children."

"Thou liest," said the other. "Thou liest like—like—like a churl. Thy father ended his days in Black Sheela's arms, but it was, unfortunately, after he begot thee. I know thy black look if I forget thy vile name. Thou art tenant to Rory of the Mill. Nor wouldst thou dare keep the road against a lord's man to-day, but that thou hast heard of the colleaguing of the sons of Owen with the gentlemen of Mounterbarry. And what brings thee up here, carrying sand? Phew!" Here our hero suddenly paused in his angry tirade, whistled low, and drew nigh to the garran, which, serenely unconscious of the jars of his betters, was calmly cropping grass by the road side. Ulrick narrowly examined one of the baskets and thrust his crag-hazel between the crevices of the wickerwork.

"As I expected," he said, "here is no sand."

The sand must have been of a very tough consistency, for Ulrick's wand could not pierce it.

He looked away wrathfully to the spot where his petitioner had been but that moment kneeling. He was not there, but half a hundred yards off

his large frame was perceived flying across a field with incredible swiftness. Ulrick watched his career much as a sportsman would the flight of an escaping bird.

"Exactly," he muttered. The flying rustic, running southwards at first, turned then to the east, plainly with the intention of entering the territory of the insurgents. Ulrick threw off the outer covering of sand from one of the baskets, and presently drew out what seemed to be a mere bundle of linen ; but the linen being removed disclosed a handsomely carved ashen mether filled with silver spoons. The next bundle disclosed a pair of silver candlesticks, below which, with woollen wrappings between, Ulrick's eye caught the sheen of silk. Restoring these "jewels," and taking for himself the rustic's blackthorn, which seemed a likelier weapon than his own hazel twig, he seized the bridle of the animal and, leading him round, stepped briskly westward. One of O'Sullivan's false vassals had been sending his treasures across the boundary. So much was evident, but Ulrick, too, knew the name of that false vassal, and purposed paying him a visit ere many hours should pass. The lad and his garran stepped on quickly. Half an hour later, and in a district more populous and fertile than that through which he had been recently travelling, Ulrick stopped, and facing towards a substantial house which stood on the hillside a few furlongs from the road, and which was half-hidden by trees, applied his fingers to his mouth and sent forth a whistle which might almost do credit to a modern steam-engine.

A countryman appeared at the door, and, seeing Ulrick, began to run down the narrow way.

"Send me Long Walter," cried Ulrick. Long Walter, a gentleman well known to Ulrick, was one of the lord's hired soldiers, and cessed upon this homestead.

"Your honour, he's in bed," cried the farmer.

By this time all the country side was stirring; the sun was well over the horizon. Ulrick made a gesture of impatience.

"Send me his boy."

"Your honour, he's gone to get beer fresh drawn for Walter's breakfast. But, sir, he's coming. He's just beyond thee," he continued, more cheerfully.

Turning leftwards and westwards Ulrick did see, quite close to him, Walter's boy returning with Walter's beer. He was a lad of about Ulrick's own age, that is to say, nineteen or twenty, wearing the glibb and flowing hair, and in a costume differing hardly a whit from the ordinary rustic or churl of the period. His yellow locks, however, showed signs not only of the comb, but of recent ablutions, and his complexion was fresh and clear. His peasant dress fitted exactly his well-made figure. His carriage was assured, not to say saucy, and his full, blue eyes looked out frankly and bravely at Ulrick. "I am a man of war and a gentleman," he seemed to say; "there is courage in my heart and steel on my thigh." A sword hung at his left hip, and on his straight back, strapped to his shoulders, he carried a neat little keg, from which projected a cork and ring. We may assume that the keg contained the agency necessary for washing down Long Walter's breakfast.

The meeting of these two worthies was very grand and impressive. The lad with the keg removed his coarse straw hat from his head, held it in his hand, and so continued to hold it while the interview lasted. Ulrick responded to his salutation with a polite but stately inclination of the head. This lad, in long sleeves and petticoat, though holding no high place in its orders and degrees, was yet an indubitable member of the clan regnant of this territory. He was an O'Sullivan, moulded, therefore, of finer and purer clay than that of the peasantry, and so removed by a great and impassable gulf from the servile population, by whose labours this tyrannous but martial clan was sustained in all its pride and vainglory.

"Deliver thy keg," said Ulrick, shortly, with emphasis, and like one accustomed to command. "Awake Long Walter, and say in his ear the sons of Owen are in arms and against the lord. Return again to me. Make haste."

There was evidently a sufficiency of internal discipline in this clan. The lad bowed gravely and without the least sign of surprise, and vanished up the rocky way.

In less than three minutes he was again beside Ulrick.

"Tidings have already come to Long Walter of these treasons," he said. "The constable of the men at *bonaght* on this side of the realm hath sent him word. The constable is collecting and sending westward all the churls and the cattle. Thyself art bidden to breakfast with Long Walter."

"Cathal O'Sullivan," replied Ulrick, impres-

sively, "I give into thy charge this garran and what he bears; lead him straight to Dunboy."

The other blushed and looked displeased.

"Nay," continued Ulrick; "press a boy to lead him, and mind this; all is not sand that looks like sand. I would give thee a message to the lord, but I will be at Dunboy before thee. Call out Art Dearg and Art Roe, and send me straight, by the hand of Art Roe, Black Tom now cessed upon Mac Owen, Look to yourselves well passing the lands of Rory of the Mill. He is a traitor to the lord."

Art Dearg and Art Roe were two men of war cessed somewhere in this neighbourhood, and Black Tom, one of the Chief's war-horses, cessed also on some much-enduring farmer.

CHAPTER XVI.

LONG WALTER, THE GALLOWGLASS.

ADDING not another word, Ulrick, bowing slightly to the subordinate clansmen, stepped swiftly up to that farmhouse where Walter Foda, up to the last few minutes, had been sweetly slumbering. In the doorway stood a neat-looking old woman smiling and curtseying, to whose hospitable demonstrations our young friend responded with somewhat careless civility.

"Good woman," he said, shortly, "get breakfast ready, and with haste."

Two greyhound puppies came fawning around him, which he observed critically for a moment or two.

"They don't come on as they should, Dermot," said he sharply to the man of the house, who stood aside, smiling welcome and submissiveness, but by no means with the same frank cordiality as his wife.

"What is their food?"

"Bread and new milk, your honour."

"Show me their bowl."

The farmer brought him a timber bowl.

"Thou hast spoken the truth," said Ulrick after an inspection of the vessel. "Give them

boiled nettles with meal twice a week, and now and again boiled potatoes with new milk, for I know there are potatoes grown in this town."

"I will, your honour."

Whoever fared ill in mediæval Ireland, the lord's dogs seldom lacked good treatment.

"Art thou coming, Walter?" he cried, looking toward a wooden partition at the end of the house, from behind which came a great noise of splashing of water and general disturbance.

"Anon, anon, sweet Ulrick," answered a deep voice in English from the interior.

Ulrick sat down on a wooden settle which ran along the north wall of the house facing the door, and waited impatiently. Presently Long Walter's voice was again heard.

"Woman (*a bhean*), a clean collar."

The hostess thereupon, opening a press, took out one of those voluminous frills, with which every one who pretended to be in the fashion used to adorn his neck and shoulders in those days. To receive this article of attire the man of war now opened the door, revealing his formidable proportions, but not his face. The lintel of the doorway drew a line just under his pointed beard and across his big chest, which was enclosed in a tight-fitting buffcoat, secured with large silver buttons and adorned at the wrist with frills. His mighty legs were clad in long-hose of dark blue cloth, and the extremities smartly shod in shoes of brown leather, well varnished, and fastened with clasps of massy silver.

From the motion of his hands it was plain that he was submitting the collar to a careful examination.

"It is ill-washed, mother," said he, "and ill-ironed; get me a better."

"Glory be," said the woman, as she returned to the linen press, "but 'tis he has the hawk's eye for a speck." She said this looking towards Ulrick, and with an expression which might be translated, "See what a grand gentleman we have here, humble as we are. Of the tyranny of the whole arrangement she knew nothing and dreamed nothing. It was according to customs honoured by all her kind, time out of mind. She rather liked it than otherwise. Surprise is often expressed at the good manners of the modern Irish peasantry. There is really no occasion for surprise. They learned their manners from the clansmen and personal retainers of the chieftains, and the clansmen learned theirs in the castles and at the board of their lords. Long Walter's private chamber seemed to occupy nearly half of that farmhouse. There were two beds in it, one for Long Walter and the other for his boy, the sprightly young martialist whom Ulrick had despatched in charge of the laden garran. The walls were limed, and the earthen floor softly carpeted with fragrant tops of the finest heather. From a peg on the wall hung the gallowglass's suit of armour—chain-mail—and as bright as kid-skin and fuller's earth could make it. The wooden partition prevented the ingress of peat smoke from the larger chamber. The gallowglass, on taking up his quarters here a few months since, had pressed a carpenter from the next village to erect this partition, and had paid him never a penny for his labours. "Let the lord pay him

if he chooses," thought Long Walter, if he thought about the matter at all. The carpenter did what he was bid without complaining; he was accustomed to far worse forms of pressure. Long Walter did not scold or storm at him; on the contrary had complimented him on his handiwork, and had even graciously directed that he should have his meals at the same table with the household. He treated to like courtesy and liberality the mason whom he employed to break open a new window and enlarge an old. Glass was very dear and scarce at this time, or he would certainly have requisitioned the services of a glazier also. The windows had wooden shutters, which were occasionally put up and barred to exclude "the weather," that is to say, the rain. Usually, however, they remained wide open to all the winds, Long Walter and his boy recking little of thorough draughts.

Above the suit of chain-mail, and covering the whole width of the apartment, extended Walter's battle-axe. The blade of this formidable engine was as sharp as a razor of the finest-tempered steel, and shaped something like a shoemaker's knife. On the right side of the armour hung Walter's sword-belt, ponderous sword, and skian, and on the other his well-scoured and shining helmet, which was of the common Elizabethan pattern, our man of war preferring a basnet to the old-fashioned tall morion.

"Art thou dressing to meet a lady?" laughed Ulrick from without, impatient at the gallowglass's tedious toilet.

"Aye, lad," responded he, "to meet Ulrick

Ny Sullivan." Ny Sullivan was the feminine of O'Sullivan. To this big warrior, Ulrick, with his refined features, lips just showing their first down, and slender figure, seemed scarce a soldier.

"Yes," he repeated, "to meet Ulrick Ny Sullivan;" but added in a lower voice, "for a feast, too; for the feast of Ned."

Ned, it must be explained, was the Irish war-god, and the language as well as the traditions of the country still retained many allusions to that being, who, if no longer exactly worshipped, was still potent enough in the land. Long Walter, like many of his kind, dressed with rather more care than usual when there was fighting in the wind.

"Lazy Walter, long and lazy," was the only retort of the satirized party to this sarcasm, to avenge which if uttered by another his retort might have been fierce enough, and the forerunner of deadly combat. Long, lazy Walter now appeared huge in the narrow doorway, and shortening his six feet three of martial stature by some half a dozen inches in order to get through. His presence seemed to fill the house and dwarf its proportions. Walter was a good-humoured and good-natured son of Anak. He might have been called Brown Walter had he not grown to such a height. His hair was brown and cut according to fashion, that is to say, short save about his ears. His eyes, too, were brown and soft, but with a devil lurking in their lazy depths. Walter Fada would have been, I think, a dangerous person to rouse. He and Ulrick meeting so, face to face, saluted each other in a frank spirit of camaraderie,

but with rather more formality than one would have expected. Men in these times did not shake hands by way of ordinary greeting. They bowed or raised their caps. Gentlemen only shook hands after a treaty or by way of a solemn assurance of amity.

"Bless me, lad," said the gallowglass, "how muddy, stained, and tossed thou art. Get thee gone in here and make thyself smart. O woman, see to his wants."

So saying the gallowglass busied himself about the table, making some fresh dispositions and arrangements. The gallowglass, I may mention, was the illegitimate son of a Mayo gentleman named Walter of the Strokes, a very stirring person of whom Bingham, the President of Connaught, entertained a poor opinion. A great many of the common soldiers at this time were younger or illegitimate sons of men of rank.

Presently Ulrick reappeared looking much fresher and cleaner, and with his glibb and long hair well brushed and combed. The gallowglass surveyed his altered appearance and fresh young face with smiling approval.

Meanwhile the woman of the house, with her hand beneath her apron, and her eyes upon her warlike lodger, stood attentively watching his every motion, eager to forestall the slightest wish of her formidable if polite guest. At a sign from him she removed the wooden drinking-vessels from the table, and replaced them with silver mugs on the handles of which there were carved figures. The gallowglass had in fact a very considerable number of valuable articles, at the time known

as "jewels," all the fruit of his own personal exertions. It was all plunder gathered by himself out of surprised castles and burned towns, or his share of the divided spoil after a victory. Every one of Walter's jewels represented some stirring and sensational incident in his life. They were to him what his scalps are to an Indian brave, what his brushes are to a sportsman, what his ringlets and love-letters to a Lothario—signal proofs of gallantry and success. Ulrick knew these silver mugs well. They were two out of twelve which Walter had triumphantly borne away out of a rich burgher's house in the strong and opulent inland city of Kilmallock, when, in company with Sir James Fitzmaurice, he had scaled the walls and plundered the city. Solemnly Walter decanted, or rather diskegged the beer into a great earthenware jug, while Ulrick scanned the figures with which it was embossed, and by which a hunting story was well and artistically set forth.

Just then a comely young woman, as fresh as a wild rose, but somewhat stouter than seemed necessary, burst into the house with a basket of watercresses. Seeing Ulrick she blushed, dropped a curtsey, and set down her basket. But in spite of reassuring expressions from the gallowglass, and which were uttered with some embarrassment on his part, that comely and happy-faced young woman vanished just as suddenly, and was no more seen.

The gallowglass having glanced keenly at Ulrick, whose countenance, however, showed at the moment no particular signs of intelligence, bade him be seated, and himself solemnly made the

sign of the cross. Save an extensive assortment of strong oaths, that sign was the only religion owned by Long Walter, or indeed by many of his class.

So the seasoned belligerent and the younger warrior proceeded to lay their hands upon the prepared dainties, that is to say, the substantial breakfast which was supplied to them without money and without price. It consisted of oatmeal stirabout and milk, boiled eggs, a brown cake, hot from the griddle, salted butter, cold fowl, and a platter of watercresses which had just been gathered by the rustic Hebe from some neighbouring stream. There is always a pleasure in watching animals as they feed, and the hostess enjoyed this pleasure to the full, observing the trencher-prowess of her guests with evident delight. Her explanations concerning the absence of bacon in the presence of the cold fowl were profuse, and not easily comprehended.

"Indeed, O woman," replied Long Walter, graciously. "Thou hast always things so nice and good, that I believe no gentleman at *bonaght* in Munster is better served than myself. Still, as thou sayest, a little bacon might have added a relish."

Walter had been, as he called it, "at *bonaght*" in many farmhouses, and had long since made the discovery that, on the whole, politeness and flattery could extract better attendance and superior provisions than the bullying and storming of so many of his class. Ulrick, who had been eating with a will, at last laid down his weapons, took a deep draught of ale from his silver mug, and

contemplated his large friend, who was still toying at the table, and had in fact eaten little.

"Try again, Ulrick, my lad. Who knows when we may be able to victual the castle again?"

"Nay, I have breakfasted," replied our hero.

"Now, lad, tell me thy story; thou hast had adventures this night."

Just then a piercing wail was heard, and the house-wife came running in beating her hands together, and raising high and shrill the Irish *caoine* for the dead. She was followed by her husband. They had, in fact, just received the orders, which some person in authority had sent over all this region, that they should remove their cattle and effects further to the west, war being imminent on that frontier. Walter very quietly induced both to retire, followed them to the door, giving certain orders in a low voice, and then returning, sat down composedly, poured out fresh mugs of ale for himself and his guest, and repeated his demand for Ulrick's story, which, as we are well acquainted with it, need not be again told here.

As he told it Long Walter looked graver and graver. He was not an O'Sullivan, only a retained soldier of the lord's, a Connaught gentleman here at *bonaght*, but he was true to his salt, and faithful to his employer.

"Thou art for Dunboy, then, I gather," he said, as Ulrick concluded. "Hast thou a horse?"

"No; but I have sent for Black Tom cessed on Mac Owen."

"And as good a horse as there is in this country. His sire was ridden by Warham St. Leger the day that Hugh Maguire killed that good President"

[here the gallowglass uncovered reverently,] "and that President as gallant a gentleman as ever wore a gilt spur at his heel. I saw Black Tom's sire led riderless through the gates of Cork. I was in the Queen's service then."

"Two gallant gentlemen fell that day," said Ulrick.

"Aye, and they fell gallantly," cried the other. "The bravery and chivalry of Banba had a sore stroke that day when two such knights went down —one pistolled and the other lanced."

Neither Ulrick nor the gallowglass thought of the political aspect of the tragedy in which the Queen's President of Munster and Tyrone's Master of the Horse fell by each other's hands.

"That horse which bore Sir Warham now draws the coach of my Lady Carew," added the gallowglass, with a look of disgust.

"Tell me of the new President," said Ulrick —"of Sir George Carew. What manner of man is he?"

"A civil-spoken man," answered the gallowglass, dryly. "He hath a flattering tongue. When he was Master of the Ordnance he said to me, 'A man like you who can carry it, ought to wear bullet-proof armour.'"

"'Your honour,' said I, 'if I can help it, I'll never make a lobster of myself.'

"He only laughed, and went on flattering. He wanted me to do something, something I did not like. Phew! this place is very close and hot. Phew!"

Long Walter rose from the table, expelling from his lungs a great deal of breath, and with

evident marks of agitation, strode out into the open air. He returned soon, and looking at Ulrick, said,—

"Ulrick, lad, thy place is very near the lord's person. Well, then, let no one be about him, Irish, English, or of the blood of the fair strangers (the Normans), who for any reason has been with the Lord President."

Ulrick looked inquiringly in the face of the gallowglass, then, with a sudden gleam of intelligence in his eyes, nodded his head sapiently. He believed he understood the reason of this warning. The President would endeavour to establish a spy in the chieftain's *entourage;* but Long Walter meant far more than that. Of the new President's methods of meeting rebellion we may learn more presently. Long Walter had somehow become acquainted with Carew's peculiar practices, and his habit of taking short cuts to success.

A clattering of horse's hoofs interrupted the colloquy. Ulrick stepped to the door. Up the stony way, a way which indeed was a road in summer, but a watercourse in winter, came Black Tom, with proudly-arched neck, and coquetries and plungings indescribable, with a skin like a looking-glass, evidently in prime condition. A lithe lad with long fiery-coloured hair, and wearing a sword at his side, ran by him, holding the bridle.

"Thou hast taken good care of him, O Art Roe, and I shall say the same to O'Sullivan to-day," said Ulrick.

"Win victory and blessings for ever," answered

the other. "The house-man would stint his nobleness" (i.e. Black Tom's nobleness) "in the matter of oats. He said he was not bound to supply it beyond what he grew himself on his own land. But I told him Black Tom was cessed on him without condition, and that ere Black Tom lacked oats to his belly, he should know the taste of my skian in his own."

"And thou saidst right, lad," observed Ulrick, approvingly. "I warrant 'twas last night he refused the oats."

"It was ere last night."

"It is all the same," replied Ulrick, glooming. "The churls have been looking for alteration since Captain Love sighted the Spaniards."

"Thou hast no sword, Ulrick. Come with me," said Long Walter, returning into the house and leading Ulrick into his boarded room. He unlocked a heavy black box, from which flashed the gleaming of diverse sorts of weapons, as well as martial bric-a-brac indescribable. There were spurs and horses' bits, ornamented sword-handles and battleaxe heads, swords, sword-belts, petronels, coils of match, etc. They represented a portion of Long Walter's earnings in his arduous profession. Long Walter's account of how he got them, one by one, would have formed an excellent history of Munster since the time of the Desmond wars. They were the spoils of Queen's men and the spoils of rebels and of outlawed gentlemen, for Long Walter had seen much service, and of various kinds, and had in his time fought for and against many causes.

"This sword," said Walter, "belonged to Sir

John Desmond. I ran him through with my lance in the grey of the morning on Ardfinnan beside the Blackwater, just as he was getting on horseback. Captain Zouch gave me the sword, a brave gentleman, and so was Sir John, too; none braver. But that is a trophy I cannot part with. This, now, thou mightest have, but I doubt it is too heavy for thee. I took it from a gentleman of the Earl of Southampton's people who was Master of the Horse to my Lord of Essex. It was in the first day's fighting at Askeaton, and I hooked him from his horse, as he charged past me, with the cross point of my battle-axe. Nay, lad, I am sure it is too heavy for thee. Why, he was near twice thy size."

"Try me," said the lad, stepping from the room, and in the outer and larger chamber struck, thrust, and parried imaginary blows, while the gallowglass looked on admiringly.

"It is thine, lad," he said. "Nay, I will belt thee—and cap thee, too," he added, after this ceremony was over. He went into his sanctum, and returned with a handsome Spanish hat, spinning it on his left hand, bringing also a fine plume and a shining little aigrette of silver, with which he proceeded to adorn it.

"We must tighten the band," he said, as he tried it on the boy's head. "Big heart, little head. How thou art stained!" Whereat, fetching a brush, he proceeded to remove the now dry stains from Ulrick's handsome short cloak. "Nay, thou must go smartly. Maybe *she* will see thee. Tell me, is she kinder?" he added, lowering his voice.

The boy turned to him a sudden woebegone countenance, and the tears trembled in his eyes. He did not otherwise answer this tender question.

"Walter," said he, "I will not return alive from these wars; but, God willing, I will do some brave things ere all end—things that the rhymers will gladly put in their songs. Then, perhaps, sitting by her father's hearth, when she hears my name mingled with sweet music, she will weep for me slain, and though too late, I shall have remembrance and pity, if not love."

"Pshe! Remembrance and pity! Thou shalt have love, lad, warm love, and thy fill of it, when thou comest back from the wars with a beard on thy chin, and thy thin shanks filled out a little, with glory on thy morion-top, and a gallant scar or two on thy face. Remembrance and pity! Well, she is the arrantest hussy that ever put a pain in a gallant young fellow's heart. I asked the lord to quarter me on that pipe-smoking old rascal, her father, but he would not 'harass a clerk,' he said. By the hand of O'Sullivan, if I were now quartered in that snug house at Killakaneagh I would teach her to love thee with a birch rod."

"O Walter, Walter, what is this?" exclaimed the youth, drawing back horrified.

"Nay, lad, no offence. I am a tough and rough old soldier, and 'tis long since I was in thy state. And, indeed, she's as bright as a daisy with the dew upon it, and sweeter than the heather, and cleaner than spring water."

"Ay, that she is, and her hair like the shining gold. And the gracefulness of all her motions!

Thou shouldst see her spin, Walter. Didst thou ever see her spin ?"

Ulrick, late so pale and woebegone, was now blushing like the foxglove. The big gallowglass, however, was not prepared for any more raptures. He put his two great man-slaying hands on the lad's shoulders, and laughingly said,—

"She will love thee yet, Ulrick, I promise. Now for the lord's service. I have belted thee, and must kiss thee."

The lad and the veteran embraced tenderly, and Ulrick crossed the threshold, while the gallowglass, remaining behind, busied himself about the re-packing of his numerous jewels.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE DOGS OF WAR.

JUST then there was a shot fired in the hills. The world upon which Ulrick now emerged was very different from that which he had left. The approaching storm of civil war was sending forth premonitory symptoms. The shot now sounding in Ulrick's ears had been fired by one of O'Sullivan's soldiers upon another. A brave young kerne was bleeding to death in a heathery glade not far from where Ulrick stood. He had been formerly cessed on the rebel territory, and had there formed some endearing tie of love or friendship, too powerful for his sense of military allegiance to O'Sullivan. He was now seen making for the frontier and shot without mercy. Wherever Ulrick cast his eye the whole country side seemed in motion. The piercing Irish *caoine* resounded on all sides, women wailing for the war. Boys and men were ranging the hills, driving before them sheep and goats. Below, herds of cattle and laden garrans were winding westward along the narrow way. On elevated points above the road here and there stood soldiers, the sunlight glittering on their armour and polished gun barrels.

Whether forced or voluntary, or both, there was a general movement of the whole population westward. Some of the houses were already burning; thick pillars of smoke ascended to the sky. As Ulrick descended to the road he saw a significant sight. At the rear of one convoy a splendid war-horse was being led along the road. Ulrick saw the man who led him fall; he could not tell how; and another as suddenly spring upon the horse's back, and, wheeling him rapidly round, start eastward at a gallop. Ulrick shouted to a certain soldier, calling him by his name, whose attention was at the time devoted to the clearing out of a family from a cabin by the way side. The soldier ran out into the road, rapidly adjusted the match to his matchlock, kneeled down, took deliberate aim at the rider, and fired. The latter, without a cry, fell to the ground over the neck of the horse, which soon after came to a stand. The soldier having reloaded his gun, and attended by a kerne carrying a long battle-axe walked deliberately towards the hurt man, drew his sword, and with two or three blows, cut off the head. The kerne fixed it on his battle-axe end, and holding it high above his head, walked through the crowd of country people and kept pace with the procession. The wailing of the women rose anew at this frightful proof that war with its horrors was already amongst them. The kerne passed quite close to Ulrick. He held his hands out from his body lest the blood should fall on his clothes. It streamed down the battle-axe haft and over his hands on to the dusty road. Ulrick looked at and recognised the head.

"There, thou art, Shane Dhu," said he. "Would that all O'Sullivan's enemies were like thee this day."

It was a large, black head, from which grew a mane of coarse hair. Shane Dhu was evidently a brave man, though a churl. What were the Sons of the Knight to him that he should have risked his life to do them a service and secure them a war-horse at the peril of his life? Shane's father was the local blacksmith, a person too humble in the social scale to be deemed a proper host for the chief or his sons when they deigned to cosher upon their vassals. But Owen Ogue, eldest son of the late ruling chieftain, coming hither when a boy to fish one of the mountain streams, had taken Shane Dhu with him as his companion for the day, and condescended to eat supper at the blacksmith's house that night. There the knight's son, little dreaming of such a result, won the heart of Shane Dhu. Through sheer love and for no other reason the blacksmith's son had ventured on the bold feat which now ended so. Shane Dhu's head was borne along there as an object lesson to all intending traitors.

Ulrick, as soon as he could get free from the crush of men and cattle, rode forward swiftly. It was still early in the forenoon. From time to time through the trees as he went he caught the gay sparkling of the sea. A little before reaching the picturesque inlet named Addragole he heard horses' hoofs approaching. A turn in the road revealed two advancing cavaliers.

Salutations having passed, they informed Ulrick

that they had been despatched by O'Sullivan to direct the wasting of the frontier, and to assure his men in these parts that a reinforcement was on the road.

"Everything is well there," replied the lad. "Return with me half a mile. I must visit Rory of the Mill. I intend to kill him, and require witnesses."

"Hast thou the lord's warrant?" they asked.

"The lord will bear me out," replied Ulrick. "This morning Rory of the Mill sent his precious stuff and jewels to the Sons of the Knight."

The horsemen looked at one another, and silently turned their horses' heads.

"We saw his boat by the pier," they said, "and rowers sitting in it. We must make haste."

In a few minutes, for they rode at a gallop, they came to a little rude pier, where was the boat just referred to, and men with oars in their hands sitting in it. At the other side of the road a little company was crossing a green field by a path which led towards the pier. There was a lady leading a little boy by the hand, a gentleman, and a little girl. A woman followed with an infant in her arms. When they caught sight of the horsemen the little procession seemed to pause for a moment. Presently it was in motion again, though with a more hesitating and uncertain progress. Ulrick's party heard the infant wailing and the nurse using the usual soft Gaelic terms of endearment. The three horsemen awaited their approach with fixed and rigid countenances. Beyond the green field lay a cluster of autumn-tinged trees, through which were seen the white

walls of a low thatched house. Beyond gleamed the white thread of a waterfall rolling down the steep eastern side of Hungry Hill. The house was the house of the luckless Rory, and the little procession consisted of Rory, his wife and children, and the nurse. He was a man of middle age, of robust build and florid countenance. He wore the common buffcoat of the period, a great Irish cloak with loose fringes clasped on the breast with some shining material, and a conical cap with curling brim. The lady wore a mantle and hood, the latter drawn. Her face, seen within the hood, was pale as ashes. Rory (he was not a miller though he owned the mill), as he drew near our party, saluted them, and lifted up his voice with a poor assumption of cheerfulness, as if greeting old friends and acquaintances, which, in fact they were. Everyone knew everyone else in this small realm. The horsemen raised their caps silently in reply. The procession drew nearer.

"Lady (*a bhean uasal*)," said Ulrick, "thy husband must come with us."

The lady clasped her hands.

"Ulrick, son of Shane, have pity on us."

"Lady," answered this youth of nineteen years, "I scorn to deceive man or woman. I will have no pity."

She fell to the ground in a swoon. Ulrick rode away with his two companions, and led Rory with them towards the west.

At the first turn of the road Ulrick cried "Halt!" He descended from his horse.

"Rory, son of Brian, son of Art," he said, "my lord has been a kind lord to thee. When Sir

Owen, the deposed chieftain, went eastward into Mounterbarry after that decision of the Queen and Council which set my lord in his place, thou mightest have followed him. But thou didst not, and my lord gave thee lands and maintenance, and took thy right hand into his, and thou wert his man, and at his board ever hadst thy place of honour according to thy degree. Yet thou art to-day confederate with the sons of Owen to overthrow and banish my lord and thine. Hast thou any defence or justification ?"

Rory of the Mill was at no time a man of many words. All he replied now was only a Gaelic equivalent of our modern proverb, "Least said soonest mended."

"You are three to one," he added, "It is in my mind that you would kill me."

Ulrick flushed.

"I have often heard it said by the rhymers," he answered, "that when one man is overtaken by a company he has the right of single combat, though it profit him little, for if he kill the first man and the second he is killed himself by the third. Nevertheless it shall not be said that I, Ulrick, son of Shane, son of Randal, son of O'Sullivan, aided by two others, slew one man. Draw now, and these gentlemen will see fair play on both sides."

Rory of the Mill did draw, but the combat was of short duration. Ulrick slew him there without pity, nay, with a savage joy, and not only slew him but cut off his head, and presented it to the elder of the two horsemen, using as he did so some Gaelic phrase customary on the occasion. In

spite of some gleams of fantastic chivalry he had his own full share of the savage spirit which governed mediæval war. He washed his sword in the stream that turned the luckless Rory's mill, mounted Black Tom and rode westwards. He heard a great cry behind him, but never turned. His heart was hot for his lord and cold to all else just now. That cry came from Rory's people as the other horseman rode past bearing the head upon a lance's point. Rory had been led into treason by his young and pretty wife.

Whoever thinks these things *too* terrible, let him reflect upon the punishment inflicted for high treason by the laws of England; the half-hanging, the disembowelling alive, and all the rest inflicted upon many a noble gentleman in the "merrie England" of the Plantagenet and Tudor sovereigns, and inflicted in cold blood, and with far less justification than there was for this act of vengeance.

A little further west, and at the other side of the Bay of Addragole, picturesquely situated at the head of a green lawn sloping down to the sea, stood another white thatched cottage such as poor Rory's. There was a little porch before the door, and, hard by, an orchard and flower garden. All at once a little boy came flying down the gravelled path that led to the road, his little cape fluttering behind him. He was followed hard by two young men with swords by their sides.

"O Ulrick," he cried, "I am so glad to see thee. But why art thou so still and pale?"

Ulrick dismounted, bared his head, and half kneeled before this strange little apparition.

"No, no," said the child, with a sudden assumption of superiority, "stand up."

Ulrick did so, but still kept his cap in his hand.

The little boy was handsome rather than pretty. He had a long face, brilliant black eyes, and his complexion, though pale, was pure. His jerkin was of velvet, bound by a belt, in which hung a little sword of lath. He wore a feather in his cap, and at the moment when he bade Ulrick stand, looked and carried himself like a little chief.

"Mother," he cried, "here is Ulrick—Ulrick the Ready—come quick."

The two armed men were now standing like statues near the boy. They were, of course, his guard.

A lady still young, pale, pretty, and very gentle in demeanour, drew nigh, who spoke to Ulrick with much cordiality and sweetness. She invited him to come in and rest and refresh himself, an invitation which the little fellow clamorously supported, even to the extent of catching the horse's reins and trying by force to lead in Black Tom.

Ulrick declined the proposed hospitality, at the same time communicating briefly his tidings, most of which the lady had already heard. He rather unfortunately urged her to go to Dunboy during the war, to which she replied, blushing slightly,—

"Surely thou canst not think that Lady O'Sullivan would make me welcome there."

"Tell my father," said the boy, "that I can ride the roan pony he gave me over anything now, and that I am getting too big for him, and that he must get me a horse. And why must I

have only a sword of timber, now that there is war? I will ask him to knight me the next time I see him; I will, mother. Cuculain was knighted at seven."

Ulrick at last got away, but the boy cried after him,—

"Give my commendations to my little brother, and tell him I will be his man, faithful and true."

Traces of a double influence appeared in this speech. Some one had said—"Thou art the chief's eldest son." Some one else said—"The Queen will never acknowledge thee, being born out of wedlock. Be chief man to thy brother."

This last was his mother's advice.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE LORD'S HOST.

A LITTLE further on Ulrick saw far away two grey objects stationary upon the highway. As he approached they swerved towards the mountains. They were wolves. They ran sideways, and snarled and showed their teeth as they passed him on the right, running eastward. Beyond them a flight of grey-necked crows, the Irish vulture, then far more common than now, swept across the mountain side with joyous cries and ejaculations, moving in the same direction. Ulrick paused a moment, watched the phenomena, and murmured, "I see the vanguard of the host." Resuming his journey, he perceived, as he expected, though still far away westward, quick and irregular glintings and little points of flashing light. The irregularities of the way soon concealed them from sight, but he knew well their significance. Presently he heard, still faint and intermittent, sounds which thrilled the inmost fibre of his being. Anon all was silence, then the sound swelled out on some freshening of the mild warm west wind. It was the sound of war pipes playing "O'Sullivan's March." Mingled with the music, there rose strong and sonorous.

one of the favourite war songs of the clan. Yes, there was a host upon the road, a host preceded by those terrible avant couriers which Ulrick had already observed. Far away upon the grey mountain side other moving objects ran forward or stood stationary, and again advanced with movements that indicated joy. There was war on the wind, and the birds and beasts of prey were flocking to the feast. From the top of a rising ground Ulrick saw on the level beneath him, passing along the base of the great barren mountain called rightly enough Hungry Hill, horse and foot swiftly advancing towards him with that regular motion, rise and fall, of marching men which is always so beautiful and impressive. To Ulrick it was not only a host, *s uagh*, but a mighty host, *mor sluagh*. A modern eye would see no more than a company of armed men in what was to an Elizabethan Irishman a great army. When the Queen's forces concentrated for a battle with Tyrone, and the villagers along the line of march stood open-mouthed to see them pass, the joined host, the Queen's host, horse and foot, seldom if ever exceeded 4,000. The battle of the Blackwater would have seemed a mere skirmish to the men who fought at Aughrim. Any modern European battle will seem a poor thing beside the Armageddons of the future. Elizabethan Ireland was thinly peopled and poor. A chieftain who could equip and send to the field 500 warriors was a potent lord, a man of great power. Towards Ulrick now, as he paused, delighted upon his eminence, advanced about 400 men. Over them flaunted the O'Sullivan banner, with his arms

woven on a ground of white. Some horsemen went in front perfectly equipped in the Elizabethan style, indistinguishable from the English cavalry of the period, save that they rode stirrupless and that their lances were slenderer and at least four feet longer than the regulation standard. Behind these marched the musketeers, wearing helmets, jacks, shoulder-pieces, and cuisses, every man with his match-lock, snaphance or calyver on his shoulder, his coils of match at his girdle, and the end ignited. A faint smoke mingled with dust and breath went up from them as they marched. They were succeeded by light infantry—i.e., the kern. These wore no defensive armour of any kind. They were bare-headed, but not bare-footed. Though shod with strong brogues of wood, and iron they stepped lightly along, looking as if at any moment they would break into some martial dance. From them came, for the most part, the singing which Ulrick had heard with such joy. They were lithe, slender, and agile. Every man carried at least two spears, on his thigh a sword, in his girdle a dagger. Every man wore the glibb and long hair flowing on his shoulders. Few of these were more than twenty-five years of age. They wore close-fitting tunics amplifying from the waist down into striped or checked petticoats, and provided with long loose sleeves. Their close-fitting trews, or rather long hose, were usually of checked colours. These kern had been new-clad that very day for the war, and were young enough and gay enough to enjoy their smart new uniforms. To them succeeded what men called "the battle," i.e. the heavy-armed

men or gallowglasses, picked warriors of great size and strength, armed not all alike, for though most of them wore the same defensive armour as the musketeers, viz. the regulation Elizabethan armour, a good many still wore the long mediæval shirt of chain-mail similar to that which we saw hanging from its peg in Walter Fada's chamber. Other light troops, chiefly the personal attendants of these gallowglasses, followed, while half a score of horsemen brought up the rear of the host. Ulrick drew aside out of the way to let them pass. This force was what might be called a *corps d'armée.* It was perfectly equipped and complete in all its branches, wanting nothing to make a perfect army. It had the due proportion of various arms, cavalry, light shot, the forlorn, and the battle. When O'Sullivan, with all his strength, took the field he was deficient in cavalry, but in this particular force the due proportions were observed. There was no field artillery. Few Elizabethan Irish armies were so equipped. That arm had indeed been tried, but found to be of little service, costing more trouble than it was worth. But this little army exhibited another feature of a peculiarly mediæval and Irish character. Past Ulrick where he stood, and also at the other side of the little army, clearing fences and bog holes like deer, ran a crowd of wild men, dirty, ragged, unkempt, bare-footed, and mostly bare-legged, with long matted hair and uncut glibbs straggling over their eyes, every one of whom carried a stick in his hand. More of the same sort followed, leading or beating forward shaggy ponies laden with empty pack-saddles and baskets.

a confused disorderly flood of almost primeval barbarism and extraordinary raggedness, noisily shouting and running. They seemed, however, to be under the command of one gigantic young rustic, who carried a staff something like that of a modern drum-major, and who, from time to time, shouted at and cursed his barbaric horde, calling to the foremost to draw back, to the loiterers to come up. Wild and strange as was this miscellaneous horde, it was an essential element of an Elizabethan Irish army, as essential in any warlike operations as even that solid and shining "battle" of gallowglasses. These were the marauders, plunderers, and cattle-drivers, "the light-footed predatory troops," which gathered in the harvests of war. If the steel men and the kern were the reapers, these last were the gatherers and binders and those who brought the harvest home. In their wildness they had a discipline of their own and a training peculiar to themselves. Every man had been regularly listed and booked. They were marauders and plunderers by profession, and trained to their strange work by regular apprenticeship. In the territorial organisation they occupied a loose position between the clan regnant and the Gibeonitish, labouring population. Hard by was a small lake. Through the midst of this a number of the depredators splashed, waded, or swam, with loud and joyful cries. They emerged dripping on the further shore, but set forward again as cheerful as water dogs. One of these fellows passed just behind Ulrick as he was exchanging a few words with O'Sullivan's constable. The fellow paused for a moment, flung

back his hulking shoulders and his head, and threw into his whole figure and face a comical imitation of that young gentleman's high looks and bearing. The constable saw him and smiled, the passing soldiers laughed aloud. Ulrick turned quickly round in his saddle, but could see no cause for merriment. The predatory man was again tramping industriously forward in his loose shambling style, all hair, stick and rags. As Ulrick, still suspicious, continued to watch him, the predatory one, half turning his face, threw upon him such an eye through the glibb, so saucy, so gay, so full of meaning that a general explosion of loud laughter broke from the ranks, in which Ulrick, too, was forced to join.

Bidding the constable farewell, Ulrick again rode rapidly eastward, dashing through many a shallow, bridgeless stream, descending into many a hollow, climbing many a height. Our primitive road-makers cared little for levels or gradients; indeed, seemed to love going out of their way in order to catch a hill.

On the one side lay the flashing sea, on the other the grey bare mountains. Often he passed through a wild copse or small forest, gay with holly and the scarlet clusters of the mountain ash, or through quiet dells of dense hazel, where the noise of a torrent cooled the hot day. Once Ulrick paused, struck by the silence and beauty, and the play of lights and shadows upon the ground, flickering and waving then just as now, and touching just the same chords of emotion in youthful hearts. While he paused and looked, a confused clamour of voices smote the ear. Riding forward,

he met at the entrance to the wood a great train of laden garrans and some rude country carts piled high with unseen goods, covered with sail-cloth, and strapped down with ropes. It was the impedimenta or military baggage of the army—tents, cooking utensils, ammunition, surgical instruments, meal, butter, etc. O'Sullivan's host, such as it was, was perfectly equipped, ready to go anywhere and do anything that four hundred men could reasonably be expected to do. The drivers drew aside from the road, drawing even their carts out of the way, while the young man rode past, very slightly acknowledging their duckings and other marks of respect. They were churls. Shortly after he saw before him the gleam of brass. It was O'Sullivan's siege-train, to use a big word for a small thing. A dozen stout garrans were drawing slowly forward some small brass cannons of the kind called sackers. The only engines then capable of destroying well-built castles were culverins and demi-culverins, which were guns of huge size and weight. Sackers might, however, destroy the bawn wall and small houses within the bawn, and were found otherwise serviceable during siege operations. O'Sullivan's three sackers were now being hurried to the front. Each had a carriage of its own specially constructed for the purpose, composed of stout beams resting upon the axle-trees of two pairs of strong low wheels made of solid timber bound with iron tires. A few musketeers marched with this small artillery. Other carts succeeded piled with timber, or filled with hides. This part of the convoy represented the true castle-taking enginery of an

Elizabethan chieftain—viz. "the sow," more generally known as the mantlet. It was a wooden skin-protected pent house, under cover of which walls were sapped and castles bored through. Pausing to exchange a few words with the soldier who had charge of this curious engine, and who was, in fact, a Scotchman named Crawford, Ulrick pressed forward again, and approached the little town of Castledermot, known now as Castletown Berehaven. Here some ancient O'Sullivan had built a strong castle, calling it by his own name, Castle Dermot. Dermot's Castle greeted Ulrick's eyes pleasantly as he reached a height near the little town and began to descend.

NOTE.—It may surprise the reader to hear of a park of artillery in the poessession of this remote chieftain. Yet, I speak from the book. Philip O'Sullivan writes of his cousin's artillery, and how he used it effectually at the storming of Carriganass Castle, which was the stronghold of the Sons of the Knight. *Torrentirupem arcem quam tenebat Eugenius O'Sullivan* (i.e. Owen Ogue, Son of the Knight) *partim aggere, etc., partim aeneis tormentis quassatam in suam potestatem redegit*, p. 235

CHAPTER XIX.

DRAWING HOMEWARDS.

A SMALL but beautiful harbour glittering in the mild sunshine, and crowded with fishing smacks and boats, lay in front of the castle. Sandy Bay was then its name. A low, green island lying at its entrance broke the force of all waves, and provided a great peace and stillness for those who dropped anchor in Sandy Bay. On this low, green island there was one of those circular ramparts known vaguely as Danish forts. As he cast his eye carelessly on this low green island, resting so peacefully in the peaceful waters to-day, and dotted here and there with nibbling sheep, little thought Ulrick of the part which that pretty island would soon be called on to play. Ulrick lived to see that island dark with serried ranks of the Queen's soldiers, that Danish fort bright with cannon and flashing destruction upon the broken ranks of his own people. Round Castle Dermot there had grown up a considerable, though primitive, Elizabethan town. Sandy Bay was the seaport of the territory, a territory much richer and more prosperous than one might imagine. Between the grey barren hills were many fertile stretches of arable land and

pasture, and in the rocks many sunny and warm spots where the men of Bera grew oats and wheat, and were beginning to grow potatoes. The hill sides were roamed over by hardy mountain cattle, flocks of sheep, and herds of goats. The surrounding seas swarmed with fish. Every summer there came thither from France and Spain thousands of fishermen, who spent the summer and autumn months here, and supplied a good and ready market for the agricultural and pastoral produce of the country. Besides, there was a regular commercial intercourse between that country and the Continent, an intercourse never interfered with by the clumsy regulations, or tapped by the greed of corrupt officials. O'Sullivan was Admiral of the coast, recognised as such even by the Governor for nigh a hundred miles all round. Import and export dues of all kinds were paid to him, and we have it on the authority of the President of Munster that his marine jurisdiction was wise and mild. The man who owns the sheep does not usually worry and harass them. The chieftain as a sea-lord seems to have been a good one. Again, this territory had never within memory, and hardly within tradition, been the theatre of disturbances which could be dignified by the name of war. There had been no internal contests concerning the chieftainship that I can discover during this century, and the martial proclivities of the ruling clan had been exercised in strange territories and not in their own, to the enriching of Bera with plunder from abroad, not to its impoverishment by fightings at home. Government by chieftains

had its good side too. Order was strongly preserved by a man whose power and wealth, nay, whose existence depended on the maintenance of order. If the laws and customs lent themselves to tyranny, they were at least well understood, and were in harmony with the ideas and habits of primitive people. The lord of the soil was resident, and rents were consumed on the spot. Whatever advantages may accrue from the "nationalization of the land" accrued under the rule of the chieftain, for he was the State and owned the land, he as head and representative of the clan. The servile population had no share in the consumption of these rents, as they had no rights in the soil; but so far as the clan regnant was concerned, there was perfect land nationalisation. Under favourable circumstances the rule of the chieftains, though far from ideally perfect, produced good results. The reign of Donal O'Sullivan in the little land realm of Bera had been, so far, one of uninterrupted peace and prosperity. His cousin Philip, the historian, tells us that the country was prosperous, *Bearra multis opibus locupletata*. This might be attributed to local patriotism but that the fact is otherwise provable. For example, Donal O'Sullivan, Prince of Bere, in the crisis of his fate, was able to put into the field an army of 2,000 fully equipped soldiers, a really great army judged by Elizabethan Irish standards.

Of this thriving little realm Castle Dermot was the capital and seaport. The town clung around the Castle, sheltering itself, as it were, beneath the knees of that strong protector, and

was the seat of a good deal of homely industry and small commerce.

A little outside the town Ulrick passed by a house-builder labouring at his vocation close to the way. He might be more properly called a basket-maker, and indeed he was both. One day he wove houses, another day he wove *skehanes* or *skehogues*. To-day he was a mason.

Between upright poles set in the earth he was deftly weaving oziers, rod after rod ; the structure was already breast high. Seeing Ulrick, he saluted the young patrician by touching one knee to the ground and rising again. He was a shrewd, dry-looking old man, decently clad in the picturesque Irish fashion of the times.

"I'm glad to see thee at thy vocation, Fergus," said Ulrick, "thou at least dost not quake at the Sons of the Knight."

"And why should I quake, Lord Ulrick," replied the old man cheerfully, "when the champions of O'Sullivan are beyond me ? A big *creaght* to them and a steak to my old woman and myself out of the same. God go with thee, my gentleman."

As Ulrick rode up the street, a woman with bare arms, which she wiped the while in her apron, ran out wildly, first dropped a curtsey to the equestrian, and then seized violently a scantily clad little girl who was playing on the roadway with her juvenile companions. The child roared while she was being led home by her mother, the latter scolding and vociferating, "Come in straight with me now," she said, "in straight, or I'll redden your back for you this day." In

the principal ale-house there was a merry party of sailors or fishermen. Amid their clamour Ulrick heard the words "Santa Maria" and other phrases, which showed that Spaniards were within. Passing the house of the sailmaker, Ulrick saw his yard filled with men and boys sitting on straw and stitching away furiously. He knew what this meant without making inquiries. The sailmaker had been requisitioned to supply the chieftain with tents. As he rode under Castle Dermot, a white handkerchief was waved from one of the upper windows, and a soldier who was on the battlements fired his calyver into the air. Women dropped low curtseys, men stood bareheaded, little children gaped with admiration as the favourite of the man who had life and death in his hands over all this country rode through the town—an apparition of youth, beauty, and bravery, passing swiftly along the dingy and malodorous street. It was worth while being a gentleman in those days if the admiration of such slaves was worth anything. The mills of God grind slowly, but they grind. This wretched, servile commonalty was, in fact, the one class in Elizabethan Ireland that was destined to endure, destined to rise and rise, to become the people, the nation, and the depository of all power. Aristocracy after aristocracy has been ground away in those slow revolving mills of God, but the plebs, then treated as of little more account than the mud on the highway, will endure and flourish, growing to be, perhaps, itself a tyranny upon whose reduction the brave men of the future must spend themselves. Had our brave young

Ulrick been told that the herrings of the bay would become lords of Bere it would hardly have seemed more ludicrous to him than a prediction of the future reserved for this Gibeonitish population, which in his time did not dare to call even their hands their own.

Riding still westward between the mountains and the sea, he came to a stream over which some ancient O'Sullivan had flung a neat stone bridge of a single arch, where through a rocky ravine the water foamed down to the sea. Above the bridge on the right hand the water flowed smoothly, flanked on one side by a little grove of sword-shaped flaggers. Some half dozen musketeers here stood about in easy attitudes. A lady sat on the stream's verge torturing flaggers into something that childhood, then, as now, regarded as boats. A pretty child in a velvet jerkin with little bare legs, a lace collar, and a feather in his cap, was shouting and clapping his hands beside her, testifying huge delight as he watched the growing fleet of boats moving in many different directions over the smooth water. At the sight Ulrick bared his head, saluting the child with a loud, clear voice as his *righearna beag* and *righdamnha og dilis*—i.e. "little lord" and "sweet young prince." He dismounted and led his horse over the bridge.

"Welcome, Ulrick," cried the little Prince. *Fáilte romhat, a Ulrick*—i.e. "Hail to thee, O Ulrick."

Then he cried again,—

"Come and tell me a story when I am in bed."

Ulrick gave the required promise, mounted and rode on to the Castle. He had met two prince-

lings that day, and as we have seen had a message from the elder to the younger. Which of these will be O'Sullivan? It was by no means so certain as we might imagine.

Half a mile up towards the hills this stream which he now crossed strolled past the foot of that fairy garden in which, last night, Ulrick longed to be even "a little rose or an apple tree, or a wee daisy." It flowed by the garden of his Sheela, where she too took her walks alone like an immortal goddess. Ulrick knew every little bend, pool, and freshet of that stream from source to sea. Well he might, for he was born and spent his childhood upon its banks. On one side of the stream dwelt the adorable Sheela; on the other, not an arrow-shot away, was the house of Ulrick's mother. She was still alive, and dwelt here with her eldest son.

CHAPTER XX.

THE NEST OF EAGLES.

BEFORE he reached Dunboy, which was situate about a mile from the Bridge, several small bodies of soldiers passed him, all kernes, running in loose order, in silence, save for the noise of their own trampling feet. They leaned forward as they ran, with bright dilated eyes. If they saw Ulrick they made no sign of recognition. Their long hair was swept well back in the wind of their own speed. They were succinctly clad. Their bucklers leapt upon their backs at every stride; each man held his spear low in his left hand parallel with the ground. Every company was girt with its appropriate cloud of wild predatory people keeping pace with the soldiers. They kept the straight road, Ulrick swerving aside into the park to let them pass. He knew their purpose as if they told him; it was to exterminate intending traitors. They were the arrows of the Chief loosed against his domestic foes, and they ran each straight to the mark at which he aimed them. At last from the crest of a rising ground Ulrick looked down on the great fortress of his nation. He checked his horse and contemplated the sight for a few moments silently with

softened eyes. There, just at his feet, was his dear home, the home of his dear master and mistress, the pride, the glory, and trust of his clan, "The nest of eagles." The walls and battlements, fresh from the limer's industry, shone like snow against the blue waters of the bay. From the tall chimneys smoke rolled like upright pillars high into the windless air. The roofs, newly coated with wheaten straw, shone like pale gold; the windows here flashed, there glowed scarlet, for day was now far spent; it drew towards evening; the sun sank towards the dark long-backed ridge of Knockoura.

The fortress occupied a tongue of land near the mouth of the harbour, a tongue, however, which projected eastward, pointing up Bantry Bay. The whole tongue, spit, or promontory was built over, and contained all manner of erections, but the essential military features of the stronghold were nevertheless clearly discernible. On the north side of the spit, close to the rocky shore, rose a tall, four-cornered tower of great strength and unknown antiquity. Attached to this, but by no means of equal height, was a great solid rectangular structure, a sort of castellated mansion, showing more modern characteristics, for example many windows of good size. The walls of the bawn or courtyard were of great height, and seemingly great breadth, and were still further strengthened by a glacis. These walls extended the whole length of the promontory, and terminated in the sea.

Close to such feudal strengths there always grew up a town. The town, which owed its

origin to Dunboy, was a little further to the south, standing near a pretty white-shingled bay almost landlocked, which even then was called Spanish Bay, a name which it still bears. Here were the Chieftain's stables, kennels, and in fact generally the overflowings and adjuncts of the establishment. On that side, too, which was sheltered from the sharp north wind, lay the gardens and orchards, and generally the pleasure grounds of the castle.

The great bawn was this day thronged with armed men and peasants. The door of the hall was open, men passed in and out there ceaselessly. There was much movement, but also much silence; Ulrick had never known Dunboy to be so silent. He had ridden a little aside from the avenue which lay lower towards his left beside the sea. Thus he escaped from the track of the comers and goers, and could enjoy in privacy a quiet prospect of that dear fortress, and see it, too, better than from the road. Never did he feel so proud of Dunboy, never did it seem dearer to him than to-day. Strange emotions arose within him as he gazed with pride upon the massive walls of that famous impregnable strength. Ulrick never went over this eminence returning to Dunboy without emotion. To-day, owing doubtless to the exciting scenes in which he had lately figured, and the electrical influences with which the air was charged, he could barely control the strong tide of feeling which rose in his heart.

What followed now he was never able to explain, but at this very moment, when a proud consciousness of the impregnable strength of

Dunboy was certainly one of the thoughts uppermost in his mind, he suddenly became aware of a complete alteration in the appearance of things. The sky seemed to darken and the earth to tremble. The air was rent with tumultuous cheerings, shrieks, groans, and hoarse voices of command. Dunboy was half involved in smoke, out of which and from the whole extent of the fortress leaped perpetually red tongues of flame, attended with the ceaseless rattle and reverberation of musketry. The imposing and beautiful machicolated walls had disappeared, and the fortress was girdled by mighty embankments of earth topped with rough parapets of confused timber.

From the turrets of that tall square tower vaster volumes of smoke, redder and greater flames, and louder reports revealed the presence of cannon. There he saw swarthy, foreign-looking artillerymen plying their work with fierce energy, and saw distinctly one cannoneer with head and shoulders bent aside, and eyes of keen observation watching the effect of a shot. The roof and upper stories of the main structure seemed blown away; he could see the ragged edges as the smoke partially lifted. And now the ground where he himself stood seemed shaken by some far mightier and more appalling explosion. It was followed for a moment by utter silence, and then the tall tower on the north side of the castle fell with a terrible crash. Ulrick saw distinctly the bright brass cannon and the cannoneers descending prone whirling down amidst the ruins. The débris filled the courtyard, while the volumes of broken

masonry rolled like a torrent over the embankment. As he looked again to see what all this meant, lo, nothing but the white walls and battlements set in that background of the blue sea, the pale gold roofs, the tall chimneys, with their rolling smoke pillars, and the courtyard thronged with men moving peacefully to and fro. The vision was momentary, gone almost as soon as come. And yet, strange to say, this vision, or strong imagination, suddenly projecting itself before his eyesight with all the clearness of visuality did not so much surprise him. More than once before he had found his imagination playing him similar tricks ; of its own accord painting pictures for him to look at, as if he were asleep. His attention was suddenly arrested by a voice near at hand. He turned and saw standing beside him, and leaning on a staff, an old man with a wallet on his back. He, too, looked intensely at the castle. Ulrick knew him well. He was a wanderer in the land, and was believed to have great skill in the curing of diseases both of men and cattle, through the medium of incantations cast in some antique form of Gaelic, and of divers mysterious Druidic rites and ceremonies. In these times we would call him a fairy doctor. Eocha Faid was his name—i.e. Eocha, the Seer or Prophet. He did not remove his eyes from the castle as he spoke.

"Well your highness may look at it," he said. "'Tis a noble castle, and the children of the One-Eyed man are there a long time."

"They will be there till the Day of Judgment, O Eocha, the Prophet," cried Ulrick with some heat.

"If God will. But that spit of rock has had many tenants, and time is long; and the seed of the One-Eyed man will not be the last there."

"Thou liest, Eocha the Prophet," crled Ulrick. "The earth belongs, under God, to the noblest. Therefore, the children of Suilevane, son of Moellura, shall be there for ever."

"I stood on Pulleen Hill," said the old man, without altering a tone of his quiet voice, "as I do now, and looking at the castle as I do now, and a man, whose name was Fiontann, an ancient man, a very ancient man, stood beside me, and he showed me accurately the history of the spit. And I saw no man there in the beginning, only sea-fowl, building their nests in the ledges, and diving from the rocks into the salt sea. Then I saw Eadane of the Golden Hair and her people, who were of the Tuatha De Danan, and after her the Ernai men of great stature, and after them my own people, the children of Lewy, son of Ith son of Brogan. Then came the fair strangers, the Clan Gerot, with Flemings and men of France and Sassenagh; and after them thy own people, the seed of the One-Eyed man. And he showed me, such was his art, for he is rarely intelligent, other things too. Be happy in thy day, O Ulrick, son of Shane; for truly there is no human glory but its end is sorrow, and the wise take short views of life."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE IMPLACABLE, BEAUTIFUL TYRANT.

EXERCISING over himself a powerful self-control, Ulrick turned sternly away. He did not look again upon the malicious and sinister old man, lest just wrath should betray him into some unknightly word or act. Chafing with anger and disturbed, too, by other emotions which were not anger, he rode down into Dunboy, handed over his horse to one of the innumerable horse-boys, and delaying one moment, as if to collect himself, in the very porch of the castle, and under the O'Sullivan arms, which were carved above the entrance, passed into the great hall. It was crowded with soldiers. At the further end, upon a slightly-raised daïs, stood a figure, upon which the eyes of all were riveted. It was the Chief, "the implacable, beautiful Tyrant," a king, uncrowned, indeed, but with a great deal of death in his hands. He stood before a seat which was covered with some rich, white material. His figure stood out dark, clear-cut, and ominous, against a red background made by hangings, which draped the further end of the hall. He stood in an easy attitude, as if he had but just risen to his feet for change of posture. O'Sullivan

was tall, but so bore himself as to seem to be taller than he really was. His air was that of one who seldom stood in the presence of an equal or superior. Pride, yet a noble pride, too, was written in every line of his handsome features, even in every glance of his fine, yet quiet, and slowly moving eyes. He seemed to be a young man, little more than thirty, he was in fact thirty-eight, but neither his face nor his figure, hardened by exercises of war and the field, showed the least trace of middle life; it was slender, hard, and singularly well formed. He looked a man, too, who could command himself as well as others, by no means a common characteristic of the race of chieftains; a man of purposes and ambitions, perhaps extravagant ones, and possessed of corresponding talents. Shorn of all regal attributes and adjuncts, this man's personality would have been felt and recognised in any presence. By a lucky accident his face and figure have been preserved to us through the art of a Spanish painter; but without such assistance, his actions alone attest a singularly interesting and commanding character. Greatness had not descended upon him spontaneously. Once he was nothing in this realm. By personal prowess, by conduct, by astute diplomacy too, exercised in the face of strong combinations and influences, he had conquered adverse fortune, and won his way so far to the rod of chieftainship, to his father's throne of judgment. Nor did he rest there. Vague, bright visions of an ever-growing power and glory haunted his meditations; hopes not irrational, and yet not altogether rational,

for the times were radically unfavourable to such ambitions as he cherished, and though he rose higher than any of his line, he fell with a greater fall; yet his name will live in history. Donal O'Sullivan Beare is one of the names that Ireland will not easily let die.

The Chieftain, I say, as Ulrick entered the hall, stood before the chair from which he had just risen. He was covered; every other head in the hall was bared. His attire generally was that of a plain Elizabethan gentleman, viz. a close-fitting jerkin or doublet of rich velvet, trunkhose, and broad-leaved hat and plume, also the full laced collar and wristbands of the period. Like Hugh O'Neill, like nearly all the chieftains, he had yielded to the fashions of the day, and saw no particular beauty in long sleeves and short petticoats. He had lived much in London, been often in court, having been frequently entertained at Burleigh's house and the Earl of Ormond's, and was personally acquainted, I fancy, with most of the English noblemen of the day. One article of Irish attire I find these chieftains were strongly and rationally attached to, viz. their capacious, comfortable, serviceable, and, I will add, dignified mantles, ample and flowing. It was the white ermine lining of such a mantle which showed upon the chair from which he had just stood up. The jewelled handle of a dagger sparkled at his side. His sword-belt and scabbard lay in a prominent position on the table just before his feet. At this table sat three secretaries, all wearing the traditional Irish garb. It is not surprising that the Elizabethan Irish should have

adhered so resolutely, as on the whole they did, to that costume, considering from whom they had learned to wear it. The great Richard Plantagenet, of York, and his heroic sons, Edward, George, and Richard, and the boy called Rutland, taught them to dress so.

As Ulrick entered, the Chief, with head slightly inclined, was listening to some representation made to him from the body of the hall. Nevertheless he noticed Ulrick's entrance, and as his eyes turned momentarily that way they softened, and the grave expression of his countenance visibly relaxed.

Presently, as if he declined to give weight to the representation, whatever it may have been, the voice of the Chief rang through the hall, slow, clear, and sonorous, every syllable distinctly articulated, sounding in that silence and the echoing of the vaulted chamber like a voice of doom.

"Warrant to Brian, son of Art, son of Brian of the Early Rising, to prosecute with fire and sword Shane Roe, of Glenmore, and all his aiders and abettors."

A soldier stepped forward, and making an obeisance to the Chief, stood beside the table, where one of the secretaries, a young man with an inkhorn hanging from his neck, made out the order. The secretary having written the order, poured a flood of fine sand over the paper, which he held the while above a silver tray, and handed the paper so blotted to the soldier.

"My lord," said the latter, "does the warrant include non-combatants?" The Chief's eyes flashed as he looked on the interrogator. His

countenance grew darker and more rigid as he answered with short, hard emphasis,—

"Do thou what is customary. Thou knowest the penalties of treachery and rebellion as well as any gentleman in the service."

Who originated in Ireland the slaughter of non-combatants, and the devastation of invaded territories? Did the chiefs teach the officials or the officials teach the chiefs? The officials, as the self-vaunting champions of "civility," etc., were the more guilty. As a fact both sought to strike terror so, and by indiscriminate slaughter and destruction and short cuts through hell itself, accomplish purposes more swiftly.

With unquailing front the soldier looked straight into the eyes of his lord, and then, as if satisfied, dropped one knee to the floor, rose lightly, and passed out. There will be bloody work in Glen-More to-night. The Chief's face assumed for a moment a look of fixed sternness and then relaxed. The rays of the sinking sun threw upon the painted walls or on the arras the reflections of the high, long narrow windows. The sun was setting on Dunboy. Assisting here, unbidden guests, spies and reporters out of another century, not amenable to O'Sullivan's sway, and in no danger from his marshal, we see another sun too, setting here; the sun of Irish feudalism rushing down into the deep sea of time never to rise any more, rushing down amid storms and earthquakes, flaming territories and seas of blood. There are his valiant retainers, men who will slay, burn, and destroy, according to the word of his mouth; who only desire to read his purposes that they may execute

them, ready to sacrifice their own lives that his may be strong, glorious, and secure, for amongst these bloody men are many Ulricks. All eyes look towards him, awaiting commands, and there, like a terrestrial god, stands the irresponsible *turannos* dealing out terrible judgments, surrounded by rigid faces and strangely shining eyes. These warriors, many of them, have relatives and dear friends scattered over the realm. A relative or a dear friend may be the next whose doom the beautiful tyrant may pronounce. Here in the latter days, almost the last hours of the reign of Elizabeth, full a hundred years after all his breed, the sovereign earls, toparchs, and territorial despots, have been exterminated in England, stands this young Irish autocrat dealing out death to those who prefer the Queen and her laws to his.

We see what he does not, the sword suspended by a single hair, revolving, glittering above his head; perceive the hand, invisible to him, writing strange characters on the wall; perceive the coming vengeance which will sweep him and his, state and power, castle and clan, into the dust-heap of things that were, to repose there with all the extinct tyrannies of the earth.

Silence succeeded the departure of that soldier who bore the warrant; silence made yet deeper by the scratching of the secretaries' pens, or a deep-drawn breath from one of the men of war.

It was broken by a strange noise, which little accorded with the solemn, not to say terrible, business of this feudal court. It was an infant lifting up his little voice with loud ejaculations

of baby joy, hearing which every face relaxed, and there was a general movement of pleasure in the assembly.

The terror and the gloom visibly abated, and all, including the stern Chief himself, smiled, or even laughed, at that touch of nature which makes the whole world kin.

Ulrick looked up to the place from which these noises came. Behind the Chief, high up in the far wall of the chamber, was a square aperture or window communicating with interior portions of the castle. On this occasion it served as the frame of as lovely a picture as could be witnessed. There stood a young and beautiful mother smiling, with her baby leaping and crowing in her arms. It was Lady O'Sullivan and her youngest son. The infant had perhaps distinguished his friend Ulrick below, and was testifying his delight so. Or, indeed, it may have been the glitter and colour of the warlike show there, the flashing of armour, and the varied colours of mantles and trappings, which had set in motion his small powers of appreciation and applause. Little Astyanax wailed at the sight of his father in full war-gear. This little princeling was certainly in no way alarmed at the gleam of brass, the tossing of white plumes, and the general pomp and paraphernalia of war, with which the great hall beneath him was filled. He will yet see more of war than its splendour. This little sprout of the family tree will yet shiver and shake to the fierce war winds. He is almost a character in the famous "retreat of the O'Sullivans"; wrapped in his nurse's arms he plays his part in

the wild business, a curious and pathetic little figure, borne along there day and night in the midst of all the marchers and fighters. To-day Ulrick took to himself the compliment of those small but hearty vociferations, and laughed back responsively, acknowledging, at the same time, the more evident friendly and gracious recognition of the young mother. Many a high *bantierna* of the house of O'Sullivan had looked from this window into the great hall below, but none ever fairer or sweeter than the lady who now, with her infant in her arms, shone above this hall of doom, and the storm of agitated spirits assembled there like the moon with her one star over wild waters. And she was the last. No *ban-tierna* succeeded Ulrick's mistress in these halls.

"When will you have done?" she cried with a sort of plaintive archness. "My women are all in attendance and waiting. I will have no more of this long parley. The candle has burned past seven of the clock. Everything is in readiness now for a long time; you must stop at once, for I want my hall for supper."

Here let the curtain fall. *Nunc paulo majora.*

Part II.

LOVE AND WAR.

CHAPTER I.

AN INTREPID RESOLUTION.

SEVEN years before the time of our story, the lords and gentlemen of Ulster, after a long interval of internal peace, went into action of rebellion under the leadership of two men of the highest abilities. These were Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone and Hugh Roe, or Red Hugh, the O'Donnell, captain of the north-west of Ireland. For seven years the State had failed ignominiously in the task of suppressing these dynasts, who, without foreign aid, which, however, they constantly solicited, had beaten many times the Queen's armies, and still held the field with unreduced power, while in Ireland the State had fallen into bankruptcy and was issuing base moneys.

At last the Spanish King determined to send assistance to the Irish insurgents, and despatched an army of four thousand men for Munster under the leading of Don Juan de Aquila, a brave, skilful and chivalrous soldier.

About this time, Sir George Carew, President of Munster, received a summons from Lord Mountjoy, the Lord Deputy, to meet him and the Council at Kilkenny, to confer about the affairs of the Realm in such an alarming posture of affairs

pattering feet shod in wood and iron, the faint sniff of burning gun-matches, for there were sentinels who patrolled in the courtyard below. The mild August sunshine streamed through the windows and lay in great rectangular patches on the floor, the fresh breath of the forenoon filled the air, the sparrows twittered noisily around, or hopped on the window-sill, and looked irreverently at the rulers of the land. The hum of the rich and prosperous city sounded its perpetual monotone. A water-clock between two windows marked the flight of time. Loud laughter at times grated on the ears of the Council. They travelled many paths of speculation and suggestion, coming up eventually to the same blank wall. They could not conquer Tyrone, they could not remove the Spaniard from the sea, they could not prevent a universal revolt should the Spaniard land in force. Hardly a third of the area of Ireland was in revolt; measured by wealth and population, hardly a fifth, and they could not conquer that fifth. And now the Spaniard, the world's terror, the Colossus of the earth, was stepping this way. The tramp of six thousand Spanish infantry sounded more clearly in the mind's ear of the councillors than any noise striking the bodily ear. Tyrone and all the rebel lords could hardly bring together four thousand. Yet the State had spent eight years in trying to beat these lords. The debate flagged; for a time no one spoke. In that silence the noise of galloping hoofs was heard. It ceased; there was a sound of parleying somewhere in the courtyard below. Presently an

officer of the Earl's household entered the chamber, and kneeling, presented a letter to the President. It was in Wilmot's handwriting. After a moment's survey Carew read the contents aloud :—

"My Lord,—This is to advertise you that the Sovereign of Kinsale sent me letters importing that a Spanish fleet of five and forty sail was discovered from the Old Head bearing towards Corke. The Spaniards being close at the haven's mouth, the wind suddenly scanted, whereupon they tacked about and made for Kinsale. Within the town Captain Saxey's company lay in garrison ; but because the town was of small strength, orders were given by me that they should quit the same and retire to Corke. Upon the twentieth of this instant the enemy landed and marched with five and twenty colours to the towne. On their approach the townsmen set open their gates, and the Spaniards took possession.

"I have sent unto the gentlemen of the country—" viz. all the Irish lords—"to repair unto me."

"I am,
"Sir Charles Wilmot."

The Viceroy was the first to break silence.

"I shall return to Dublin," said he, "collect every available soldier, leave Tyrone unattended, and march at once to meet the Spaniard."

"To Dublin and at once," echoed the Council.

"Has your honour ammunition and provisions to follow the army into Munster ?" asked Carew.

"The magazines are empty ; I have none."

"But what then?" continued he. "The country may be requisitioned for victuals. For munitions, we have, at the worst, pikes. Munitions will follow in a few weeks."

"While you are in Dublin," answered the President, "Munster will revolt to the Spaniard. You can then get no provisions in Munster. Not a castle nor a walled town will in fourteen days fly the banner of the Realm if your honour adheres to this resolution. Munster will revolt in all her borders."

"Why, what else can I do?" cried Mountjoy angrily. "I have no one with me but the gentlemen of my household."

"What else can he do?" cried Sir Richard Wingfield, Marshal of Ireland, a haughty, peremptory man.

"What else can he do?" cried the rest of the Council, storming at Carew, who sat unmoved, never changing his eyes from the face of his youthful superior.

"What else can I do?" repeated Mountjoy, ignoring the rest and turning with full attention to the President.

"Your honour can ride with me to Cork."

"My lord, this is madness. I have not a soldier."

"Come, nevertheless."

"I have no guard."

"I have a hundred horsemen," said Carew.

"There is no force in Munster to make head against the enemy."

"I have two thousand veteran soldiers," replied Carew. "Sir Charles Wilmot has written to all

the lords and gentlemen of the province to attend with the rising-out of their countries. Unless they see your back turned to them and your face to Dublin they will obey. Your own army can follow ; it will follow with the more speed, seeing the Lord Deputy out with the forlorn."

"But we can make no permanent resistance to Spanish infantry without the full strength of the army, and I have no munitions or provisions."

"I have," answered the President. "Your honour, for six months I have been in anticipation of this storm. For six months I have not given a biscuit to my soldiers, only provision money. My troops have gone through their exercises without burning a yard of match or an ounce of powder. Munster has been at peace, and I have made the peace serve in this manner."

Again the whole Council, from the Earl of Ormond down, broke out stormfully upon Carew.

"The provincials seeing the Deputy arrive alone would surely revolt—revolted, they would cut him off and take him prisoner, and the capture of the Deputy would mean the revolt of all Ireland.'

Here the worst of the Council were the most eloquent, enlarging on the personal safety of the Viceroy. While they still clamoured, Mountjoy rose from the throne. He turned to Carew, took him by the hand, and said,—

"My lord, I thank you for your wise forethought and prudent counsel. I will go."

That was a brave resolution on the part of Mountjoy. Upon it, as on a hinge, revolved the fate of the Realm, and possibly the fate of the Empire. Carew knew Munster well. Spaniard

was a name to charm with in those days. It was equally a terror and a fascination. Nothing but the presence of the Queen's Deputy, he felt, would hold Munster true to the Queen in the approaching storm. Munster, he believed, would revolt to the Spaniard without some such hold and stay, and the revolt of Munster would draw after it the revolt of the Realm, nay, of the royal army, some four-fifths of which was Irish and Catholic. Then it was the wise purpose of the Spanish Government not to embarrass itself in the hopeless task of endeavouring to govern Ireland, but straightway to organise the military Irish for the invasion of England, where a great Catholic party was even then ready and eager to co-operate.

CHAPTER II.

MOUNTJOY'S RIDE THROUGH MUNSTER.

NEXT day the Lord Deputy, attended by the Earl and some 500 horsemen, rode out of the west port of Kilkenny, great crowds of people lining the roads on each side, and cheering loudly. For some miles he passed through a country which might be described as the garden of Ireland. Here were no castles nor moated granges. Nearly all the houses, great and small, were quite undefended. There were pretty lawns, ornamental timber, here and there old orchards, with ripe apples gleaming like gold amongst the scanty russet foliage. The shield of Black Thomas and his ancestors had never been lifted from this region, and no enemy had ever diffused here the horrors of war, not, I think, since the Bruces invaded Ireland. Upon a narrow bridge which spanned a slow tributary of the Nore, Ormond took a stately farewell of the Lord Deputy, and rode back with his barons. Black Thomas had undertaken that the military strength of Tipperary and Kilkenny should follow straight to Kinsale under the leading of certain of his kinsmen—a sure promise, for the grand old Earl had never broken his word.

Mountjoy, escorted by Carew's guard of a

hundred horsemen, rode swiftly westward. Ere long the aspect of the country began to alter, and altered evermore as they left Kilkenny behind. Here and there the white turrets of a castle would rise from embosoming trees. Every castle that they passed showed a red flag, the sign of loyalty. From the turrets of every castle there broke the smoke and report of small-arms, and now and then of a brass falcon or falconette. Ever as they went plunging deeper into the heart of Tipperary the castles grew more numerous —castles, castles, everywhere castles. Every Tipperary man who was anything had his castle. From the top of one rising round where they paused a few minutes to blow their horses, Mountjoy counted thirteen castles all floating red flags, and all burning gunpowder in his honour. Tipperary, beyond any manner of doubt, was on the Queen's side in the great controversy of the hour. Tipperary was well apprised of the significance of this transit of cavalry through her borders. The Lord Deputy rode fast westward, ever westward, following the course of the sun, now declining towards the Atlantic, but fast as he rode, rumour with a hundred tongues rode faster before. Rumour had got on horseback half an hour after Mountjoy had announced his resolution. It was already beyond Cork, getting into the intricacies of MacCartie Reagh's country, riding up the Lee valley, riding through Duhallow, through the woody fastnesses of Connelloe. Rumour visited the old Countess of Kildare at Crome Castle, got from her a hasty meal and rode through Limerick, sending the news towards the

Geraldine chiefs of West Munster. From the Barrow to the Atlantic there was no highway on which some horseman or swift pedestrian did not appear, telling the same tale, though with variations—"The Lord Deputy is coming; he is on the road." That mythical person in the German fairy tale who heard the grass grow, would have heard this day in Munster a mighty variety of queries, exclamations, etc.:—"Art thou for the Queen?" "Art thou for Philip?" "The Lord Deputy is coming; have a care." "What will the lord do?" "Send the news to Shane More, to Hugh, son of Raymond, to Turlough of the Wooden Leg, to Art Boy, with his Ear-to-the-Storm." "Yes. True. He is coming, and straight as a calyver's shot."

CHAPTER III.

THE RISING-OUT OF THE QUEEN'S IRISH.

WITH wonderful rapidity the news ran through Or-Mond, Tho-Mond, Des-Mond, and Iar-Mond, through all the Munsters, and had a strangely sedative and reassuring effect. That prompt flash of high purpose kindled responsive fire in men's souls. The mighty Spaniard, after many threatenings, was at last come; he was here with six thousand men, with arms and munitions and gold, and above and beyond all, the preternatural panic-striking power of the presence of such a name. But here, too, was the Lord Deputy, the high Queen's man and champion, undismayed, riding to meet him. From Cork, Carew's Vice-President, Sir Charles Wilmot, had written to all the lords of Munster, calling on them to meet him. They wavered and hesitated. In hundreds of castles Wilmot's letters were read and gravely discussed by men not ill-disposed to the State, nor yet well-disposed, but terribly solicitous about the main chance, men profoundly conscious that their all was now at stake—that a false step now would mean ruin. Buff-coated gentlemen, in big frilled collars, anxiously turned over Wilmot's letter or had it read to them again and again by their friars or secretaries, then donned

their coats of mail and rode to hold assemblies on hills, and take sweet counsel together in Gaelic. And still they wavered and hesitated, the stake for which they were asked to play was so great. Then came rumour, with many voices, riding out before the Lord Deputy on all highways and byways, multiplying and reverberating, till it amounted to a positive announcement :—" The Lord Deputy is coming ; he is on the road. There is not a soldier with him. The Deputy in person will lead the men of Munster against the Spaniard." There was a flash of chivalry and magnanimity in the action of the Viceroy, which kindled responsive fires in the breasts of the chieftainry. The Viceroy did not fear the Spaniard, why should they ? He came alone and unattended into the province, trusting to their honour. They would not abuse his trust. The Viceroy appealed to all that was best in them, and did not appeal in vain. As one man the lords of Munster rose-out with their armed followers, and marched to meet him. Out of Kerry came Fitzmaurice, Baron of Lixnaw, and the Knight of the Valley, and the Knight of Kerry, O'Conor Kerry, MacGillacuddy of the Reeks, O'Donoghue More, and O'Donoghue of the Glens. Out of West Cork came De Courcy, Baron of Kinsale, the chieftainless nation of Barry Roe, and the chieftainless nation of M'Cartie More, the Lord of Muskerry, with all the men of the Lee valley, M'Cartie Reagh, Lord of Carbry, O'Leary, from the rough highlands where the Lee still white rushes down to Inchigeela, O'Mahony, Lord of Kinelmeaky, lord, too, of many castled promontories, O'Crowly, O'Donovan of Clancathail, and O'Driscoll of the Ships. From

East Cork came the Viscount Buttevant with the clan Barry More and the two M'Donoughs of Duhallow, O'Keeffe, and O'Kerwick, Condon of Condon's Country, the Seneschal of Imokilly, the White Knight, the Lord Roche, and the Barrett, and all the far-lying scattered fragments of the Geraldines. And the cities and walled towns, the sure reliance of the Crown in all crises, "the sheet anchor of the Province," held firm too, and stoutly bore the strain. The walled towns sent each its contingent of fighting men to the great hosting of the Queen's Irish.

I said all the lords rose out to meet the Viceroy. That is not quite correct. One lord did not. It was O'Sullivan Bere. He did not come nor send an army. He sent a letter of apology instead by the hand of one of his men. O'Sullivan Bere during these exciting days lay encamped around the Franciscan Monastery in Bantry, put his trust in the Spaniard, watched the development of events, and kept his powder dry and his pikes well burnished. He daily exercised his small army, increased its numbers, improved its efficiency and generally made himself as strong as he could. Amongst Carew's entourage he had a red-headed Cornish friend, once a lawyer, who had been recently sending him certain intelligence, which from sundry other signs and tokens he knew to be true. "Carew seeks to destroy me," thought the chieftain, "though I and the Lord Barry alone withstood Tyrone. Very well, I shall temporize for the present, but the moment a good opportunity presents itself, I strike it on the side of King Philip."

When Mountjoy and Carew reached Cork, Mountjoy took up his quarters in the Bishop's Palace, Carew in Shandon Castle.

About the same time that the Lord Deputy of Ireland and the President of "all the Munsters," amidst the roar of popular welcome, and the thundering of great guns from the towers were clattering through the east port, there rode quietly through the west port a young Irish gentleman of prepossessing appearance and of a certain gravity beyond his years, mounted on a splendid hackney and leading one still finer. It was our friend Ulrick, but looking much less Irish than he used to be, for his pretty glibb was gone and his ambrosial auburn tresses curtailed. Two gentlemen similarly mounted and attired accompanied him, one carrying a hawk upon his wrist, and behind followed a train of pack-horses led by barefooted and bare-headed boys, glibbed and long-haired, clad in clean yellow shirts belted at the waist and plaited to the knee, the sleeves of which drooped low, almost to the ground, for no one minded what such rascals and base people wore. Had Ulrick and his gentlemen appeared here in that uncivil, outrageous, barbarous, and rebellious costume, they would have been arrested at once by the City Marshal and lodged in the roundhouse.

CHAPTER IV.

AN ELIZABETHAN STATESMAN.

Sir George Carew, President of Munster, rose from his breakfast table, and rising, delivered with much gravity a short speech to his guests, some twelve or fifteen gentlemen, English and Irish, chiefly Irish, pleasantly declaring that a man who suffered from the gout was little missed in any company, and that this Spanish business and the presence of the Lord Deputy necessitated his early withdrawal. He was a large and fine-looking man of very urbane and gracious manners. Lady Carew was a contrast, lean in person and haughty in demeanour. She was once besieged in this very castle, and while bullets were pattering against the walls and flying through the windows she wrote a letter to her husband, in which she said that she did not feel the least alarm.

One of her pages, a pretty boy, son of the White Knight, drew aside the arras, opened a door, and remained on his knees while the Lord President passed out. Carew did not walk, but rather shuffled forward across the rush-strewn floor. The President, as we have just learned, suffered from the gout, yet he would see no physician. He prescribed for himself, and kept his own

medicines. There were physicians in Cork, but Carew feared them; they might mix something in the bowl. So at least he informed his royal mistress, but it was a very groundless fear, product of an evil imagination nourished by an ill conscience. Passing through a long dim corridor which connected the breakfast chamber with his offices, he sneezed loudly, if I may relate a thing so small about such a great man.

The corridor was pervaded with smoke of a pungent odour. It exhaled from the burning match of a warlike armadillo, who was on sentry duty there, and who, with some difficulty, succeeded in doffing his iron pot as the President shuffled by. At the further end of the passage Sir George opened a door and entered a well-lit and airy apartment surrounded by high presses containing a great number of lettered drawers. The apartment was hardly grander in general appearance than the chambers of a respectable modern attorney. Nevertheless, from this den of pigeonholes, Sir George Carew governed all Munster, and governed it, if not well, then with perfect success. At a table were four secretaries, who stood up as he entered. Two boys, pages, who occupied one of the windows, simultaneously went down on their kness. The recently arrived letters, most of them neatly tied up with silk thread like little packets, lay on the President's table beside his desk. When he sat down the secretaries resumed their noisy scratchings with long quill pens, and the pages, ascending their tall stools, began to talk to each other with signs and grimaces. One of the secretaries, a young

Cornish gentleman with a red head, took the liberty of inquiring about his health, and was courteously answered. He was a young gentleman in the pay of Ulrick's lord. Espionage was not all on the side of the Government. The Earl of Tyrone had agents even in the Queen's bedchamber. In spite of the gout, Sir George's appearance was that of a man who was prosperous, and knew it. He had successfully accomplished a great work. When the Queen wrote to him she called him "My trusty George." Rebellion might flourish elsewhere in Ireland; in his province it was dead. A profound peace reigned in Munster. The pedlar with his pack-horses rode from castle to castle without molestation, and cows lay abroad at night in the fields. When he came hither as President, only eighteen months since, Munster was in rebellion in every corner. The Sugane Earl of Desmond was out with eight thousand men, and the Earl of Clancare with six. Almost all the lords of Munster were confederate with Tyrone, and Tyrone's lieutenant commanded here a body of regular soldiers, superior in number and quality to the Queen's. All the undertakers, Edmund Spenser, the immortal poet amongst them, were dead or fled. At the first storm-signal they ran, and with such alacrity that the Queen did not hesitate to call them "cowards." In that storm two men only stood for the Queen, the Irish Lord Barry, and the Irish Prince of Bere and Bantry. But these two were quite overborne, for Tyrone came down into Munster with great power, slew the then President, wiped out the Lord Barry, menaced the Prince of Bere, swore all the provincial

lords as members of the Catholic League, set up a Prefect of his own over the province, and went his way. When Carew entered upon his Presidentiad, all Munster, save the walled towns, was Tyrone's. Not to count the minor lords, there were three commanders in Munster, any one of whom was far more than a match for Carew in the field—the Earl of Desmond, the Earl of Clancare, and Tyrone's lieutenant.

Carew, eschewing the field, betook himself to his den of pigeon-holes, and thence overthrew the confederacy. He first practised with Tyrone's lieutenant, and drew him secretly to the Queen's side. He stirred up a revolt of their feudatories against the two great Earls, played them against each other, and Tyrone's lieutenant against both, until he got the better of them all.

His methods were not nice. He wrote decoy letters so worded as to intimate that men really still loyal to the insurgent oath were in treacherous communication with himself, and stuffed these letters with the most solemn references to "God" and "Christ" and "holy keeping." He hired one of Desmond's men to assassinate him. He decoyed the Earl of Clancare with a protection, and secured the Earl's person at the cost of his own broken word. His soft manner and bland countenance greatly assisted him in these operations. So well had he succeeded that he was now in a position to spare a thousand men for the service in Connaught, but he was cautious and provident, and the officer who commanded them had orders at the first word from himself to double back like a hare to Munster, for at this date Carew

was keeping a sharp look-out for the arrival of the Spanish. The Fleet was coming, and Carew knew that it was coming, and when it would come, and where. In short, from the Imperial point of view, Carew had been a complete success. Great men are still human. Carew, as he seated himself at the desk, did not immediately attack the piles of letters. He drew to himself a little clean deal box, opened it, and took from the interior what seemed to be a toy cannon. This, with great gravity, he endeavoured to put together, for the tube and its furniture were separate, and the latter in many pieces. Presently he drew a paper from his desk, and proceeded to adjust the instrument in accordance with written instructions contained in the document. He spent a long time at this occupation, pausing and considering at intervals. The engine was not a toy, but a model representing a new method of mounting pieces, and Carew was an enthusiast in all matters relating to artillery. While he was so engaged a young officer named Stafford entered by the same door and drew a stool familiarly to the President's table. He was a bright, clever-looking youth, was in fact Carew's private secretary, and, like all his tribe, rather an exquisite. He looked at his superior with an air of gay intelligence.

"Hast thou a good name for our book, Tom?" asked the President, stooping over his piece.

"Ay, your honour, '*Debellata Thomonia.*'"

"I fear, Tom," said the President, "that thou art a young man void of understanding. It was no conquest. The lords and gentlemen of the

province, out of their envy of the great ones and their just fear of Tyrone, returned one by one to their allegiance. That is no conquest. My lord of Muskerry, and Donald M'Carthy, and the White Knight and all the rest would hate me for ever if I gave out that I had conquered them. They would surely work my overthrow, and they have many friends at Court. 'The Pacification of Munster' would do better. Put that into Latin, and I warrant it will have resonance enough, viz. '*Pacata Thomonia.*'"

"Nay, my lord, the world will go about asking of '*Thomonia,*' 'What meaneth this word?' and one man will say one thing and another another. We will call the book '*Pacata Hibernia,*' the substance thereof notwithstanding, and adorn the same with maps and plates, so that it will be a cause of admiration to posterity."

That book eventually took shape, and is now the most famous of our Anglo-Irish historical classics.

Carew and his young friend spent an absurdly long time over their "piece," elevating her breech, elevating her vent, and generally manipulating and adjusting her, seemingly with the greatest delight.

A visitor was now announced. It was one of Carew's frontier captains, an Irish gentleman of the Clan Condon, wearing a countenance of proud elation.

He was followed by a big gallowglass carrying a sack, which, from its appearance, seemed to contain great turnips.

"They are dry, your honour," said the Irish

gentleman, and, seizing the sack, emptied therefrom some dozen ghastly heads of men.

Carew, in spite of the gout, pounced upon them with avidity, turning them over one by one with comments.

"All Connaught men," he said, "not one of them our own beggars. Take them away. Spike Hugh Ogue O'Flaherty and Hugh More over the North Gate."

So saying, he went into an inner chamber for a few minutes, and returned. He had been washing his Presidential hands.

Again, in spite of all the State affairs which awaited him, Carew returned to his toy. At length, having quite sated his curiosity, he drew to him a pile of letters, and began to sort them.

Young Stafford now withdrew, and returned, leading with him a deputation of the Mayor and Aldermen of Cork. The Mayor—a fine portly man, clad in a flowing mantle of scarlet, and adorned as to his neck and capacious chest with a "chenne" (chain) of gold, acted as spokesman. He complained of the order which had been recently issued by the President of the Council of Munster requiring a corvée of labourers for the erection of certain defensive works around the city. He spoke strongly, with a certain indignation, as the representative of a body which had rights and privileges, and was determined to stand upon them.

Carew, in reply, treated the deputation in a rather high style, flatly refusing to reconsider the order, and dismissed the scarlet-cloaked gentlemen without his customary graciousness.

"The cities grow insolent," said Carew. "They have excessive privileges; they must be humbled. They begin to presume on their services."

Twelve months since Carew was exceedingly polite to the cities, but at the time his sole dependence for the recovery of Munster lay in the cities and walled towns, ever loyal to the State in all crises.

The next visitor was a very savage-looking figure, in full Irish costume, glibb, mantle, and long sleeves, all complete. When he dropped his arms the sleeve-ends swept the floor. He was a fine, soldierly-looking fellow, nevertheless, six feet high or more, and held himself as straight as a rod, but his countenance was grim and dour. He was attended by an interpreter. This worthy came as ambassador of a captain of woodkernes who had recently appeared on the frontier and had given trouble. Through him that captain now proposed that the President should incorporate him and his braves in the army of Munster, and promised, in that event, faithful service to the President.

"Tell him," quoth Carew, "that the next messenger he sends to me I shall hang. Also that I have good reason for believing that ere many days his head will be sent to me in a sack."

He was elevating "her breech" as he said this.

CHAPTER .

CAREW AND ULRICK.

THE next visitor was a young Irish gentleman with whom we have had some previous acquaintance. He was a comely youth, dressed in irreproachable, not to say splendid court costume, and wore his hair trimmed according to the English fashion, and brushed away from his forehead. He carried a beautiful hooded goshawk on his left wrist, and a letter in the right hand. He kneeled on one knee as he presented the letter to Carew, and blushingly retired to a little distance, and so stood while Carew read the latter. It ran as follows :—

"To my Lord Carew, High Commissioner of all the Munsters. In these presents I am to advertise you, as I have already informed Sir Charles Wilmot, that without manifest peril to all the poor people of the country I cannot send any rising-out to your lordship. The sons of Sir Owen and my bad borderers wait only my departure to your honour to make prey in Bere and Bantry, designing utterly to pill and banish the country. These gentlemen are very ill-affected to the State, and that they have confederated with the Spaniards is a most vehement suspicion. I pray your

honour not to look upon me as lacking at all in love and duty to her Highness, but my present necessity is very great, owing to the aforenamed gentlemen, with whom I pray your honour and the Council to take some straight course.

"I send your honour one intermute goshawk. My country being all bog and mountain furnisheth few horses, only a sort of garrans for the use of the poor people and cultivators, yet the best that may be, videlicet, one fair hackney, meet to carry your honour or my Lady Carew, I send by the hand of the bearer.

"I am Donal, son of O'Sullivan."

Carew, whose face showed not the slightest change of expression as he read this highly diplomatic letter, looked up at the handsome messenger. From him his eyes went straight to the goshawk, glistening with pleasure, for that intermute goshawk was indeed a very beautiful creature. All great Elizabethan officials were quite crazy about hawks. Then he looked at the youth, who blushed again, finding himself under the gaze of such eyes, the eyes of the ruler of "all the Munsters."

"Draw nigher," he said benignly. "Gentlemen," he added with some peremptoriness, "I would be alone." The rest of the company thereupon withdrew.

"Draw nigher," he continued. "Thou art a comely youth, and I warrant a brave one, for all thy blushes. What is thy name?"

"Ulrick, son of Shane, of the sept O'Sullivan."

It was indeed our young western friend who

had been despatched by the chief on his first embassy.

"There is a minor sept of the nation," said Carew, "called MacFineen which lieth on the shore of Kenamarra. How doth MacFineen derive his lineage from the head of the tribe?"

This question had no political significance whatsoever, it was prompted by genealogical curiosity. Carew, as well as Burleigh, rode this hobby. He loved pedigrees, and was very inquisitive on the subject.

"His line," said Ulrick, "runneth from that O'Sullivan whom we call Dermod the Stammerer, but I know not the generations."

"But you know your own, I warrant. Is not that so?" he said, smiling, and pinching the lad gently by the ear.

"Yes, an' it please your honour."

"The wars must lay a few more good men flat ere the chieftainship can be thine."

The lad started. "My lord," he said, "it were treason in me and foolishness also to hold such a thought."

"Nay, my boy, stranger things have happened. Her Highness hath ere this pulled down the high and raised up the humble. Where is the hackney?'

"My lord, at Master Walsh's livery."

"Thou art a good lad, as well as a comely, and I would be thy friend. Nay, I have taken a real liking to thee, nor shalt thou leave me empty-handed on thy first coming."

When the chiefs sent presents to the officials, the officials gave small gifts to the bearers. It was customary, and, indeed, Ulrick anticipated some

bounty from the President, but the number of angels now produced by Carew astonished him.

"My lord, I serve a good master. I want for nothing."

The President, nevertheless, laughingly forced the money into his large purse or sporan of kid skin, which he wore outside his clothes on the left hip. He then asked the lad some general questions about the west country. At first Ulrick answered freely.

"And thy lord's chief house," said the President, "is it so strong as reported?"

"More so, my lord," said the boy, proudly. "It is not to be taken by the art or force of man."

"What of that if there be nothing but bog and rock all round?"

Carew wished to know whether there was ground hard by, fit for making approaches, and the laying of a platform.

"Nay, my lord; there is a very green lawn, very fattening for sheep. Your lordship has been mis-informed. There is no such bog nor rock. Only the house is on a rock; therefore not to be mined as your lordship undermined that Castle of the Lord of Lixnaw."

"Tut, tut. Why should I undermine any loyal gentleman's castle? And thy lord, can he get him soldiers out of that barren country? He hath told me many times that it is a barren country."

"There is indeed much mountain," answered Ulrick, growing suddenly wary.

"What force can the Lord O'Sullivan make when he puts forth his strength?"

"He has not put forth his strength in my time."

"Come, come, my lad, thou growest wary."

"My lord, a servant has only eyes, ears, and tongue for his master, mainly. It is a west-country proverb. Bear with me, my lord. Would your lordship use me as an espial upon my own lord?"

"Thou art a shrewd lad for all thy open brow. Wouldst thou serve another as faithfully as thy lord?"

"I know not, my lord. I was born servant to O'Sullivan, and live with him very familiarly."

"Why, Ulrick, I like thee more and more."

He blew a little silver call which hung from his neck. A page appeared, whom he bid take the hawk to the falconer and send to him Ancient Egerton.

"It is a gentleman with whom I wish you to be acquainted," he said. "He is a coeval, and will be a guide to you in this strange place, perhaps a protection, and will show you hospitality."

A young man a little older than Ulrick now entered the room. He was of prepossessing appearance, with a bright and engaging smile.

Carew introduced the young men, and added, waving his hand towards our hero, "He is my friend, Francis; use him as such. I free you from attendance on my person while he is here."

Ulrick kneeled again to the President, and went out form the presence with his new friend. They formed a pleasant sight as they passed out together from the precincts of Shandon Castle, chattering together most amicably, and looking much more like big schoolboys out for a half-

holiday than responsible men. Egerton was glad to be off duty, Ulrick pleased at his escape from the President, with whom he had dared to play at cross purposes. Moreover, he bore upon his person a letter from his master to Don Juan de Aquila. The big load of angels rattling at his hip did not make his heart the heavier. Cork was crowded this day with soldiers, also rural gentry in great numbers, with many of their followers. Most of the western magnates had come in to pay their respects to the Lord Deputy.

As the young men crossed a wooden bridge which spanned an arm of the Lee, a small company of gentlemen stepped on to the bridge, coming in the opposite direction. In their midst was a tall cavalier, who, by his bearing and the splendour of his dress, looked what, indeed, he was, viz. a great lord. As they approached, this tall personage looked hard at Ulrick, who glanced carelessly at him, and stepped forward. One of the retinue, however, barred the progress of the young men, standing straight in front of Ulrick.

"Thou art an O'Sullivan," said this fellow in Irish, glancing as he spoke at a device embroidered on the left breast of the youth's doublet. "Why dost thou not cap the son of the Earl?"

"Cap him thyself," said Ulrick, also in Irish. "He is no lord of mine."

"He is thy lord's lord," said the obstructor, laying his hand on his sword.

"My lord has no lord, and never will," said Ulrick, doing the same. "He caps no man in Munster, save the Lord President, who is lieutenant to the Queen."

Before the amazed young Englishman could say a word for the appeasing of this sudden quarrel, of whose origin he knew no more than the man in the moon, swords were drawn and clinking there on the bridge—clish, clash, thrust, cut, parry, the good blades striking fire as they met, all onlookers forming behind and in front to keep the lists, for a spirit of the most perfect fair play was quite in the ascendant. The combat, however, ceased as suddenly as it began. Ulrick's opponent made one furious down-stroke, which Ulrick evaded by an adroit movement. The blade meeting with no resistance, descended, striking deep into the wooden hand-rail of the bridge. Ulrick gave one triumphant flourish of his own sword over the head of his opponent, and then thrust it home with a clash into the scabbard, and, accompanied by Egerton, stepped across the bridge, the gentlemen there opening to let them pass, one of them, as he did so, observing, "Well done, Ulrick."

"Who was thy opponent," said Egerton, "and what was thy quarrel?"

"A fool of the Clan Cartie," said Ulrick. "He wished me to cap the Mac-an-Iarla."

"And who is the Mac-an-Iarla?"

"A base son of the late Earl of Clancare. Now that Florence, the present Earl, is in the Tower, the followers of this Donal challenge for him the great MacCartieship as far as they dare."

"I know Earl Florence," said Egerton; "I was one of his guard as far as London and the Tower, and have only lately returned. And so that is Donal the illegitimate? Here he turned round and looked at the group on the bridge

where loud laughter had succeeded that late seemed to be the leader of the merriment, and mercilessly mocking his officious and unsuccessful follower, who was still tugging at the timber-embedded brand. "Is it true," added Egerton, "that this Donal went into rebellion for the sake of a dog?"

"It is," said Ulrick. "He was outlawed in the Desmond wars. There was to him then a dog called Kiegangair, and this dog was his constant companion, his sentinel while he slept, and his espial and explorer—a very fine dog. When Donal made peace with the Queen, he cessed the dog upon a tenant of a gentleman named O'Falvey, the captain of a small nation in Desmond, who was truly no friend to Donald. O'Falvey killed the dog, and Donald hanged O'Falvey on a tree, and then went on his keeping with five hundred men. The Queen would permit no eric to be paid for the hanging of O'Falvey, but the sheriff, with his host, went out to take the Mac-an-Iarla for the deed."

"Well, he did bravely," said Egerton. "Many a man would take that revenge if he were not afraid."

I may here explain that Egerton was only an Englishman according to current phraseology. He was Pale-Irish, or rather an Englishman born in Ireland. His father, Captain Charles Egerton, was Constable of Carrickfergus during Fitzwilliam's vice-royalty.

"This is a good hostel," said Egerton; "let us go in and eat and drink somewhat. You will sup with me at my own house, where are my mother and sisters. We sup at six of the clock."

Here over biscuits and wine the youngsters became more and more friendly.

"Yea, truly, that Donal is brave enough, and would make a good captain for the Clan Cartie; but he challenges us to be his followers, and that challenge we are determined to deny," said Ulrick, looking fierce.

"Well, you denied it with vigour enough on the bridge just now," said Egerton, laughing. "How is it that the chief of Clan Cartie can challenge you O'Sullivans as his followers?"

"I will explain that," said Ulrick. "Formerly the chief of the Clan-Cartie More was lord also over all the O'Sullivan's, both my own people and those who dwell on the north side of the Kenmare River, the sept of O'Sullivan More. He gave O'Sullivan Bere the Rod at his inauguration, and exacted from him out of our country great tributes, *bonaght* for eighty gallowglasses amongst other spendings. But, with the sanction of her Highness"—here the lad reverently doffed his hat—"we threw off that yoke, and my lord had the Rod given him by a different hand. There is no Mac-Cartie More now, for Earl Florence was never inaugurated with the consent of the Lord President and Council, but by the might of the Earl of Tyrone; and this Donal, son of the late Earl, is not Mac-Cartie More yet by anyone's appointment, and if he were, my lord would deny him to be any lord of his."

"Had you not best avoid him, then?" said Egerton.

"I will nqt seek him, neither will I avoid him. I can defend myself against any one of his men.

And that Donal, though he doth challenge unjust rights and regalities, is an honourable gentleman, and will not permit two of his men to fall on me together."

"Yes," said Egerton, "I saw him waive asunder the gentlemen who stood behind you when you wished to leave the bridge."

After this the young men strolled through the city, Ulrick greatly interested in everything there, especially the marchings of the soldiers. All at once they found themselves as if swept forward in a crowd of people, mixed military and civilian.

"There is a masque or play forward," said Egerton. "I mind all about it now. It is in the Abbey Church; let us go and see."

They entered the church, which was rather a ruinous building. The chancel was draped, and had various primitive forms of stage accessories. Egerton succeeded in getting his friend to a part of the building which seemed to be reserved for officers and men of rank. Presently a curtain was raised and an improvised prologue uttered by a soldier, "who," said Egerton, "is in my company." According to the prologue, the play was all. about the Spaniard, the arrival of the Viceroy, and various other matters of passing interest. Mountjoy and Carew and Wilmot were all represented. It was a rude play enough, but the present and immediate interest of it gave great delight to the audience. Though the plot generally was prepared beforehand, the words seemed impromptu, and there was a great deal of foolery and loud, swaggering talk. Don Juan came in and gave a great boastful speech, and was

answered with loud menaces and threatenings by the Viceroy. Then Wilmot called aloud for the lords of the province to come with their risings-out to his assistance. Several men here came on the stage, brandishing their swords and calling to be led at once against the Spaniard. These were evidently rural Irish soldiery, for they shouted fierce Gaelic. Wilmot thanked them for their loyalty and goodwill, and then asked aloud,

"Where is O'Sullivan Bere?"

Ulrick started and looked with amazement and anger on his new friend. Were they going to ridicule *his* lord too?

The curtain now dropped. When it was raised Wilmot was alone. He approached an improvised house of boards, in front of which lay a pile of mortar and stones. A man, who throughout the play explained many things to the audience, now informed them that this was Dunboy Castle, and that O'Sullivan was in bed and malingering. Wilmot knocked at the door, and called loudly for O'Sullivan Bere.

"Tell him Bride, darling,—"

"Why that's my mistress's name," said Ulrick.

"Tell him that I am very sick and in my bed of healing. O the wars! the wars! Why did the Spaniard come to trouble us? *Ochone, ochone,*" etc.

The door was opened and a long colloquy ensued between Wilmot and the doorkeeper, a man dressed in woman's clothes, and who personated Lady O'Sullivan. At last Wilmot rushed past her, and presently reappeared dragging forward the sick chieftain by the ear. Loud roars of laughter greeted this performance, but ere they subsided

Ulrick started up from his place, blazing with wrath, and cried with a loud voice that rang through the building,—

"Gentlemen, it's all a lie."

Several gentlemen who were near laughed heartily.

"I will stay here no longer," said Ulrick, pressing angrily through the crowd towards the door, followed by Egerton. By the time they got into the open air Ulrick's wrath had abated.

"They made fun of every one," said he; "why indeed should they spare my master? And I have spoiled thy pleasure, too," he added with some compunction.

"It does not matter," said his friend. "We have had enough of this foolery. Would that we enactment of one of Will Shakespeare's pleasant plays."

It was now dusk. Behind them they could hear fresh roars of laughter. As laughing is usually contagious, the young men laughed too, and talked about the performance with a degree of satisfaction and hilarity, which Ulrick nevertheless felt to be a sort of treason.

CHAPTER VI.

ULRICK AMONGST THE PURITANS.

ARRIVING at a quiet part of the city, near the southwest port, Egerton beat the door of a good-sized house with a truncheon which hung there. When it was opened he led Ulrick up a rather steep stairs to the first landing. Here he opened a door and ushered his new friend into a warm and cheerfully-lighted chamber. There was an old lady sitting by the fire and two young ladies at a table, one of whom was engaged in some description of needlework. Before the other lay a large book from which she seemed to have been reading aloud. Egerton introduced his friend, who was received with great kindness and civility by all the party.

Egerton told all about the play at the Abbey, and presuming on their growing friendship, related in a spirit of good-natured mischief Ulrick's vigorous protest against the caricaturing of his lord. Our hero submitted to the infliction as well as he could.

The old lady, however, approached him with much sweetness, and laying her hand on his arm, said,—

"It is nothing to be ashamed of, my dear. How will a man serve his Heavenly Master, whom

he hath not seen, unless he be faithful and true to his earthly master, whom he hath seen ?"

"Thank you, madam," said Ulrick. He did not quite understand what she meant, but conceived at once a great affection for this sweet-mannered and gentle old lady. She then went back to her place and said nothing for some time.

Ulrick was aware of a certain atmosphere in this room, such as he had never experienced before. A spirit of kindness and goodness seemed to reign here. The furniture and hangings, though rich, were not of the barbaric gorgeousness to which he had been accustomed in great houses. His curiosity was excited. How were these people so different from others whom he had known, both English and Irish ? It was not that they were English. He once spent a week with Sir William Herbert, the great undertaker at Mucross. He had gone thither with his lord to attend a great hunt given by Sir William. The Herberts were different from his own people, but they were also even more different from these.

By degrees he joined freely in the conversation. He felt that he was being made much of, and, as we now say, being drawn out, but submitted to the gentle influences that were gradually thawing all his reserve.

"Thou art at thy 'Spenser' again, Rachel," said Egerton, glancing at the big book, which his elder sister had not closed.

"Yes," said she, "he is a sweet poet. I would all men of war loved him as I do. Then you would be gallant knights indeed—knights such as Christ Himself would own."

"There is a clerk who is my neighbour in the west country," said Ulrick. Here he blushed, for it was the father of Sheela to whom he referred. "He was very familiar with Master Emon Spenser. He used to meet him at the house of a certain Teigue Olaf. Master Emon Spenser, he said, was the silver tongue of the Saxons. Is he the same whose songs are in the book?"

"Yes, surely the same," said the young lady with animation; "and I see now where he learned so much about Irish rivers, and the ancient tales he tells concerning them, for I know that the word Olaf means a historian. But your countrymen were not good to our beautiful bard," she said, looking a reproachful smile at Ulrick.

This young lady was herself Irish-born, but then she was Pale Irish.

"Lady," said Ulrick, with a slight approach to heat, "they were truly no countrymen of mine. They were foreigners."

"Foreigners?" said she.

"Yea, foreigners; they were O'Moore, namely Owny, son of Rory, and Con, son of Tyrone, and Wat Tyrell, and the people of the counterfeit Earl of Desmond, namely the Geraldines. It was they who preyed the bard and burned his castle. There was not a man of my nation with them. It was a bad deed truly. They were foreigners who did that wrong to the gentle bard—foreigners, and of a truth churls in all but the name. No gent'eman would wrong a bard, but ever shield and protect him. Even Hugh Roe, when he inadvertently wronged a bard in Thomond, made ample restitution. Who are the heroes, O lady,

whom your bard celebrates in yonder large book ?"

"Many heroes," said she, turning the leaves affectionately as she answered, "one above all who is called the Red Cross Knight."

"Is there a sept deriving their line from him ? Thine own line, haply, O lady, doth it ?"

"No, truly," said she, not able to forbear a smile, "I know not that he had any children or descendant."

She looked inquiringly on the younger sister, who replied sententiously,—

"No, it is an allegory."

Ulrick seemed disappointed.

"Then he founded no nation ?"

"No," replied the elder sister ; "as my sister Esther saith, it is an allegory."

"I know not the meaning of that word, O lady."

"It means," said Egerton, with a little pride of knowledge, "that the Red Cross Knight was like a picture in the mind of the Bard—a figure in a dream."

"And never lived at all ?" said Ulrick, greatly surprised. "Then the story is not true. Our bards tell no story that is not true. If a bard be in doubt upon even a little thing in the story, he will travel far in order to get true knowledge from some one more learned than himself."

The old lady here looked up and smiled again.

"See, Rachel—see, Esther, how you are reproved. You have one book that is true, nay, is the Truth itself, yet you will forsake it for the ingenious devisings of men's fancies. Very slender would have been my comfort in the days of our

tribulation upon the Rock if I had had only Red Cross Knights and Unas and Duessas to be my stay."

By the Rock the old lady meant Carrickfergus, of which her husband was Constable.

Here ensued an animated family controversy, the young people making common cause against their mother, all talking together, while she still shook her head as one whose mind was made up.

Just then there was a great noise in the street, a sound of many feet and loud voices. A glare of light illuminated the windows. Egerton drew Ulrick to one of them. A curious street scene there met their gaze. Followed and preceded by torches, the actors in the late masque marched along the street, beating, with what seemed bladders fastened by cords to the end of staves, every one who came in their way.

"Room there," they cried, "for the Lord Deputy. I am Sir George Carew, room for the President. I am O'Sullivan Bere, I am quite well now. Room, fellow, for the Prince of Bere," etc., etc.

It was a cheerful scene, and greatly enjoyed by our young people.

After this supper was announced, which was served in another room on the same floor. I may here remark that Egerton and Ulrick wore their hats both in the withdrawing room and at supper. It was a custom of the time. The hat was a head-dress, and not a mere protection from the weather.

Francis Egerton said grace in English with a clear voice, the rest standing reverently with bowed heads. It was, in fact, a short prayer

devoutly uttered. Ulrick never heard grace said out of the Latin tongue. Ere supper was ended he almost felt himself a member of this amiable family. He sat next Egerton, who carved. Mistress Rachel sat at the other side of the table. He could not help recalling the evening meal at the great feudal establishments of the west, the immense clamour, the strong odours of food, the wild company, the boisterous talk in which no gentle flowers of thought could dare venture forth. This was, at least, very agreeable as a change. Then, too, there was a very lovely girl sitting before him, of singularly pure and delicate complexion, with cheeks just faintly tinged with red, and eyes that flashed quick answers to every word, said, whether grave or gay, especially to anything which he (Ulrick) said. The conversation was animated, easy, and flowing. In the mingled shrewdness and simplicity of Ulrick's talk, with its occasional idioms, there was a strange wild flavour which diverted, and at the same time interested his new associates.

"This grouse never made acquaintance with any hawk," said Egerton, critically examining at the same time a little square pellet of lead which he held in his left hand. "It was slain by a birder with his piece."

"Hawking is a cruel and unnatural amusement," exclaimed Rachel. "I was at a hawking party once on the Bann side; it was given by the Earl of Tyrone, and I said so to the Countess, and she said so too. It was the Countess Mabel; we were at school together at Grace Dieu."

The conversation turned on the respective merits

of hawking and shooting, and Ulrick maintained that shooting was the better sport, "though," added he, "our great gentlemen hold it in poor esteem."

"Then you shall have my second birding-piece," said Egerton. "It is a snaphance, and kills at thirty yards."

Presently the conversation turned on the base moneys recently uttered in Ireland, the first overt sign that Tyrone was breaking the resources of the State.

"The fear of God," said Mrs. Egerton, "is not in the hearts of the public men of this generation. They serve their Royal Mistress with eye service, persecute Christ's saints, and intercept for themselves the moneys of the people; England cannot live much longer under such men. The great successes of Tyrone are a judgment upon the nation that has forgotten God. Dear young friend," she added, turning sweetly to Ulrick, "doth the thought of the Heavenly Master mingle at all with thy true service to thy earthly and temporal master?"

"No, my lady."

"Dost thou ever pray to Him to keep thee and help thee in doing what is right and true?"

"No, my lady. There is with me but one prayer, and I never said it as a prayer and in earnest but once."

"Please tell me how that happened."

"Willingly, my lady. Florence, Earl of Clancare, challenged my lord to be his servant, and demanded of him certain rents out of Bere and Bantry, and my lord denied him. Then Florence

sent certain of his men into the borders of our country, and as our ill-fortune would have it they lighted upon me and my dear brother, and they brought us in handlocks to the Earl at Innis Carrha, not far from hence, and lodged us in an island of the Sabrann of bright waters, which you call the Lee. And Earl Florence, he visited us, not to our joy, and he said he would surely hang us both in the morning, for my lord still denied the rents. And that night I said the prayer, for myself and for my dear brother. It is a prayer to the Mother of God, and I cannot rightly English it, but in Gaelic it is this—*Sé do bheatha, a Mhuire, tá lán de ghrása, tá an Tighearna t'fhochair.*" He repeated the whole of the short prayer, and then went on, "And she heard me that night praying, and in the morning the Arch-Earl, high and mighty whom his followers call O'Neill, bade Earl Florence to set us at liberty."

A silence fell on all at this narrative, till Egerton said,—

"What now if thy lord as Queen's man should wage war on that Arch-Earl?"

"I would fight for my lord indeed against Tyrone's men, but if I met himself in the press of battle, surely I would steer my lance past the Arch-Earl."

"And what if thou and my brother meet in the press of battle?" said Rachel, suddenly.

"That too, O lady," said Ulrick, "may well happen. We must wear some token known to ourselves."

"Thou shalt wear a kerchief which with my own

hands—" so far the young lady went on speaking quickly. Then she stopped and blushed, Ulrick blushed too.

"Nay, Rachel, why not?" said her brother. "Every gentleman wears some lady's favour, and my friend Ulrick shall wear thine, an it pleaseth him, and I will too. Give us both kerchiefs, twins of the same pattern, and we shall never spear each other, if God pleases." He raised his hat as he spoke.

The embarrassment of Ulrick was slight and transient. That wearing of ladies' favours was a fashion, perhaps a folly, and meant little or nothing. Yet Ulrick felt a keen thrill at the thought that he might wear this young lady's favour. The star of his pretty Sheela was sinking fast before this lustrous and potent new orb of Pale Irish beauty. For Mistress Rachel was beautiful exceedingly. Hers too were eyes that kindled and flashed, glowed or melted, swift heralds, eloquent interpreters of every passing mood and thought of the royal unseen soul beyond; eyes very different from those of the merry, bright and blooming maiden of whom he had been heretofore the hopeless and despairing slave.

Since Ulrick had related his story and said his one prayer, Mrs. Egerton seemed lost in thought, and paid no attention to the rapid talk of the young people. She now addressed her conversation again to Ulrick.

"Has thy lord many servants true and faithful?"

"Many, my lady. Not indeed those to whom he gives bonaght in his country. These are not surely to be relied on. Nor yet the gentlemen who

are his tenants, and complain of rents and I know not what. Those who live with him, who have kissed his children, been comforted and advised by his sweet lady, and who nightly eat and drink before my noble lord; these would die twenty deaths for his sake."

"Are these all his clansmen?" asked Egerton.

"By no means," answered Ulrick, "they are from many noble tribes, both out of Connaught and out of Munster. Those who are close to him and guard his precious life are for the most part strangers."

When they returned to the withdrawing room, Mistress Rachel presented both the young men with the kerchiefs.

Shortly afterwards Mrs. Egerton again addressed our hero.

"Your thoughts do not seem to have been directed much to religion," she said.

She loved the lad, and desired to touch his spirit to the importance of high and serious things, though her methods possibly failed in tact.

"There is with me no religion," replied Ulrick, "being as I am a man of the sword."

"But consider David," replied Mrs. Egerton, "whose words which we possess show him forth as a rarely pious and devout soul, yet also surely a man of the sword."

"I know not that, my lady. I'm thinking that there is with him no more of religion than with others. I saw him at supper after a great hunt given by my Lord of Muskerry."

Mrs. Egerton started almost as if she had been struck. "It is of King David I speak," she said.

"Bear with me, O gentle lady. Of him too I would speak. These eyes beheld him sorely overcome with wine, and that being so, it puzzles me to comprehend how he can be spoken of as a religious. Nor have I ever heard that he at any time took vows, but hath always been regarded only as a great gentleman like others. Pardon me, O lady most noble and gracious, if I speak awry."

Ulrick had indeed spoken very much "awry," the amazed faces of his auditory showed him that.

"My mother speaks of David, son of Jesse, king of Israel," said Egerton.

"I know him not," replied Ulrick.

"The great gentleman of whom I spoke is David, son of Shamus, king of the Sept of Barry More, called also Vicecomes de Buttevant, and some time captain of the rising-out of all the Munsters under my Lord Carew."

In Ulrick's dialect a chieftain was a king (*rig*).

Mrs. Egerton was for a while reduced to silence before such a phenomenon. Indeed the depths of Ulrick's ignorance and paganism no plummet could sound. The Reformation had left a goodly proportion of Ireland almost as bare of religion as the French Revolution left France. So thought, at any rate, Mrs. Egerton.

Her next attempt to lead the young heathen's mind towards serious things was even more unfortunate. Presently she said,—

"And the blessed Saviour and Redeemer, our Lord Jesus Chtist, hast thou perchance—"

For one second Ulrick's form contracted visibly. He shuddered.

"Lady," he said, a spot of red showing on either cheek, "the sweet and gentle Virgin is enough for me. To my Lord my service is first due—not for all the jewels of the earth am I permitted to forsake him—and after that to her."

He blushed violently as he said this, and was visibly agitated, nor did he recover himself for some minutes.

Egerton came close to his mother.

"Mother," he said, "tease him not, I implore thee with questions. You speak to him in a strange tongue."

After this Mrs. Egerton subsided for some time, and allowed the young people to talk as young people will, whether they be Puritan, or Catholic, or Pagan. Very animated, gay and lively was their conversation, and as difficult to report as such conversation always is. Mutual goodwill and trust, and the native animation and gaiety of youth unloosed all tongues, and the torrent of talk flowed free. But in its freedom there was self-restraint and self-control. Of those who partook in it each was pursuing frankly, sincerely and fearlessly the highest ideal within his or her reach, and when such persons meet, their unrestrained conversation, though the theme may be the most humble, will reveal tones of elevation. In spite of the difficulties supplied by English speech, Ulrick knew that he was expressing his thoughts, grave or gay, with unaccustomed freedom and a certain joyous sense of power. Every moment seemed to awake in him new faculties, strange and unapprehended modes of spiritual energy and exaltation. Then the lad did, indeed, without

knowing it, possess in a considerable degree a native gift of eloquence.

As the night wore on Mrs. Egerton again spoke.

"It is our custom, dear young friend, to close each day with reading in God's Holy Book, with singing and with prayer. Wilt thou join with us in this exercise?"

"There will be gladness upon me to do so, noble lady, but I cannot read. Only great gentlemen and clerics read in our territories, but I can sing somewhat, and the prayer I said before—"

The old lady only smiled a very kind and tender smile, and sat down at the table, while young Egerton placed before her a book of great size.

Ulrick contemplated the large book, and then turned to the "Spenser" which still lay upon the table. Francis Egerton had closed it when the other great book was brought forward.

Mrs. Egerton felt that some previous explanation was due to her singular guest.

"You must know, Master O'Sullivan—" she began.

"Grant me my pardon, O gentle lady," said Ulrick, "but there is shame upon me to hear that word, which is reserved for the captain of my nation. I am but Ulrick amongst my friends, and Ulrick, son of Shane, son of Randal, amongst strangers."

"Then, Ulrick," said she, emphasizing the word, while the young man nodded acquiescence, "I am about to read a story about the patriarch Isaac and his wife Reebcca and their sons Jacob and Esau."

"Is the story true, madam?" said Ulrick, glancing as he spoke at Miss Rachel's copy of the "Faery Queen." "It is not an—an—argory?"

Mrs. Egerton was slightly embarrassed. "It is, indeed, true," she said. "It is God's own story, told by men, to whom it was told by Him, and who were by Him ordered to write it."

Ulrick, satisfied on this point, directed all his attention to the story.

As ill fortune would have it the chapter for the night was that in which the supplanting of Esau is described. The lady read slowly and clearly, while Ulrick listened attentively to every word.

Ulrick's first remark was that he was surprised there was no mention of Esau bringing his hounds with him to rouse the game and overtake the wounded beasts. "The mighty hunter Finn," he said, "never went abroad without his favourite hounds, Bran and Sceolan," and proceeded to inform the company that they wore collars of silver, and were led in a leash of fine bronze. "Was Esau a handsome man," he asked, "fair and ruddy, and with lustrous white hair?" He thought it might be Finn himself with a new name and in new surroundings, for Finn had more avatars than one.

"No," said Mrs. Egerton, "we are told he was red."

"It is a bad colour," said Ulrick.

He did not like Rebecca's listening to a conversation which was not intended for her.

"Yet, truly," he said, "I have known very good women to do it; only," 'he added, "such a woman cannot be the heroine in a story."

Egerton remarked that "perhaps she overheard accidentally."

Rachel was sure that it was not so, that she had listened of a set purpose, and that the whole conduct of Rebecca and Jacob was most disgraceful She never liked the story.

"Rachel, dear child," said Mrs. Egerton, "it is perilous to speak thus petulantly about any portion of God's Holy Word."

"I cannot help it, mother, and it is more certain that God gave us understanding than that He gave us this story."

"Craving Mistress Rachael's pardon," said Ulrick, "it seems to me, so far as it goeth yet, to be a good story and well told. In a good story there are the base characters and the noble. A hero looks larger and more admirable by the side of unheroic and churlish persons. So the valiant Oscar shines out more heroical beside Conan Maol. So too, I warrant, will this red hunter beside the smooth Jacob. Who is the bard, O lady?"

"Bard?" said Mrs. Egerton.

"Who telleth the story?"

'Oh! Moses."

"I never heard of him," said Ulrick, "but he is a good bard. He telleth his story as if from the report of eye-witnesses and ear-witnesses, without too many resounding words, which, though often pleasing to the ear, are like mist in the air when one desires to see clearly."

When Mrs. Egerton came to the 19th verse and read, 'And Jacob said unto his father, I am Esau thy first-born," Ulrick declared with energy that

this smooth fellow Jacob was a churl, too vile for any tale. Such a base churl lying to his own dying father!

"Madam, the lowest, lying knave and churl in all Erin would not do it, not for a kingdom. God surely struck this Jacob dead the next time He met him as He made His royal circuit doing justice round the world. Surely, He sent forth one of His angels to fetch this fellow before Him."

"There, mother, I told you so," said Rachel.

Amid a great deal of animated conversation, the chapter at length came to an end. Ulrick still maintained that the story was well told, but added that the only way to make such a vile churl as Jacob endurable was to represent him as also ricidulous; and this, he said, Moses had not done.

"If we could only laugh at him," he said, "there would be something gained. With such a character a first-rate bard ought to be able to make us shed tears for laughing, and he has only succeeded in making us angry."

Poor Mrs. Egerton was glad when it was finished, and deeply regretted her own inability to explain the mysteries hidden in this chapter. It was very unfortunate. This brave and frank young heathen had had his first lesson in religion to-night, and the lesson had been anything but a success. She was deeply disappointed, vexed with herself, with Rachel, and even with the poor heathen, who seemed to have no understanding of spiritual things.

The sisters and young Egerton stood up to sing.

The younger lady, Esther, accompanied with a bandora, a stringed instrument much used in the Pale. They sang well, even with passionate feeling, for the faith of the Puritans was then in all its freshness, and made stronger by the fierce Elizabethan persecutions, from which so many of their friends had suffered. As the voices rose and fell, voices as of souls crying for light, succour, strength, crying to some mysterious source of infinite goodness, and yet with a note, too, of great gladness and triumph, the singing penetrated deep into the wild heart of the stranger. The fountains of some great unsuspected inner deeps in his nature were broken up, and flooded his whole being with a strange rapture impossible to express in words. Love too, a newer, stronger, and nobler love for a more worthy object, started up in this tumult of the soul. This high-souled Puritan maiden, whose every word and gesture during the evening on each occasion struck within him responsive chords, seemed to him worthy of any young man's true love. The countenance, as he now saw it full lit with the mingled enthusiasm of music and devotion, far surpassed in the lad's eyes all that he had ever dreamed of beauty.

There were tears in his eyes as the singing ended, but he said nothing. Mrs. Egerton noticed those tears and rejoiced.

"Let us pray," she said.

Ulrick, seeing the rest kneel, and after experiencing some trouble with his sword, kneeled down too, and had actually begun his one Gaelic form of prayer, when finding that Mrs. Egerton's voice alone was heard, he suddenly checked himself.

Mrs. Egerton prayed with much feeling, and in the simplest language; she prayed for soldiers and travellers, children and captives; prayed that God would give light to the dark; prayed as a holy Puritan lady might pray in such an age so steeped in depravity and ferocity. She prayed for her own family and the father of that family, and for distant friends and relatives, mentioning them by their names, and finally prayed Him to protect with His grace the young soldier "who is our guest to-night."

Ulrick felt touched, even to the shedding of fresh tears. Many a great lady had ere this welcomed him to her house or castle, and treated him with every imaginable form of kindness. But there was something more than kindness here.

He longed now to be alone with his thoughts, and as he rose from his knees expressed his gratitude for the kindness shown him, and was about to bid his hostess farewell after the distant and formal fashion of the times. She, however, stepped towards him, took him by the hand, and, with tears in her eyes, kissed him.

"Farewell," she said, "dear young friend. The sweet Saviour will surely find thee, too, one day, and thou wilt find Him."

Fearing lest he should be quite unmanned, Ulrick bade a hasty adieu to the rest of the family and retired, accompanied by young Egerton, who bore with him the birding-piece with its furniture. At the street door Egerton hailed a passing link-boy. He attended Ulrick to his lodgings, which were in an adjoining street called Barrett's. There, with many protestations

of mutual regard, the two young men separated.

Early next morning Ulrick called at an arms shop and expended most of the President's gift in the purchase of arms and ammunition, to be forwarded along the western road by hired carriers to the Lord O'Sullivan at the Monastery in Bantry. From the agent of the Lord Muskerry he procured a written safe-conduct for the carriers. He purchased, too, a present for his dear mistress, toys for her children, and other gifts for other western friends. All Sir George Carew's angels he spent in this manner, for it was part of his simple theory of life that a true knight scattered his riches like rain.

It was still early when, accompanied by two horsemen, his attendants, he rode through the street in which the Egertons lodged, and with a single quick glance at the windows, passed on, leaving Cork by the west port. From Cork he rode into Carberry, spent one night with a gentleman in M'Carthy Reagh's country, a nephew of the chieftain and a man of power in those parts, and the next evening rode thence to Kinsale. He was brought before Don Juan de Aquila, and delivered his lord's letter to that commander, a stately and noble-looking man of middle age.

O'Sullivan's letter expressed loyalty to the Spanish monarch, and his own readiness to rise-out to Don Juan's assistance. He complained, however, of bad neighbours, of espials, and of want of arms and ammunition in Kinsale, but undertook, should Don Juan supply him with arms and ammunition for 1,000 men, to come to him at Kinsale at the head of 2,000. The Spanish

officers showed Ulrick much kindness. Next day he rode hence.

On the mearings of O'Sullivan's and O'Donovan's country he met a troop of horse flying the O'Sullivan banner. The lord was amongst them. He hailed and welcomed home his ambassador with a glad voice, and calling him to his side, rode out in front of the rest in the direction of Bantry.

Ulrick gave him a long and minute account of many things which he had seen and heard. He did not tell him about the angels or that purchase of arms and munitions. He wished that present to come as a surprise. But he did relate the scene at the Abbey Church.

"My lord," he said, "all the other lords and great gentlemen have risen-out at the command of Sir Charles Wilmot. Grant me pardon, dear lord, but I think that when the Queen and Council appointed thee to be our captain in the room of the Knight, thou wast sworn man to her Highness, yet thou dost not rise-out to her occasions."

This was indeed a great liberty, and Ulrick knew that it was such.

The chieftain's eyes kindled with sudden anger.

"Ulrick, lad," he said, "seek not to penetrate my purposes. Her Highness will not justify herself to me, neither will I to thee. I am captain, and go my own way:"

"Go where thou wilt, dear lord," said Ulrick, "I follow."

O'Sullivan reined up till he was rejoined by the rest of the troop. He and Ulrick rode in silence till they reached the monastery gate.

Kings are fretful, jealous, and suspicious by reason of their position. Indeed, they can hardly be other, such is their isolation, and O'Sullivan was essentially a sort of king, or even despot. It was the first cloud in Ulrick's relations with the chief. It blew over presently, and all was sunshine once more. Ere O'Sullivan marched from Bantry to aid the Spaniard the chief was as friendly and affectionate with his young follower as he had ever been.

CHAPTER VII.

LOVE AND WAR.

As to the larger current of events parallel with which this streamlet of biography runs or dallies, Don Juan de Aquila immediately on landing despatched messengers to the insurgent chieftains of Ulster, bidding them march southwards and join him at Kinsale, and proceeded at once to put the little town into a posture of defence. In a few weeks he was besieged by an immense Royalist army, regular and irregular. The Spaniard's amazement was great when he learned that the whole fighting strength of the lords of Munster was serving with the Lord Deputy and against himself, who had come into Ireland to aid them, as he thought, in breaking from their necks the yoke of a detested tryanny. Mountjoy's spirited ride unattended through the south of Ireland with his face set to Kinsale had had exactly the effect which the astute President of Munster predicted.

Don Juan, who defended Kinsale with admirable courage and skill, was now expecting relief from two quarters. He looked for the arrival of a promised reinforcement from Spain, together with a great supply of arms, money, and munitions,

and also for the coming of the northern lords, leading the long-victorious and veteran insurgent armies of Ulster. Tyrone, as he soon heard, was delaying, marching and counter-marching in the midlands, but that the fiery Red Hugh was coming to him straight as an arrow.

Mountjoy and his Council heard that too, and determined for the present to suspend siege operations and despatch Carew at the head of the whole army of Munster to meet and beat Red Hugh on the mearings of the province. Carew did not relish the task at all —no Royalist commander relished being sent against that fiery and never-beaten young warrior of the north-west —but nevertheless went, with all Munster at his heels. He found Red Hugh just entered the province and encamped in North Tipperary, at a place called the Rising-ground of the Sally-trees. Carew encamped opposite to him, and there for a few days the President and the chieftain remained at a deadlock, glaring at each other, but doing nothing. I will ask the reader to remember this deadlock at Droum-Saillech, for it will be found to have an important influence on the further adventures of our hero.

In the meantime Ulrick's lord, who had wiped out those "Sons of the Knight," with whose rebellion against him our story commenced, lay encamped in and around the monastery at Bantry with all his forces. Alone amongst the gentlemen of Munster he had refused to lead his army to the hosting of the province at Kinsale. On the contrary, he had written to Don Juan—Ulrick himself had delivered the letter—offering the

Spaniard his services, on condition that the latter should supply him with arms and money for the equipment of a second army equal to that which he had raised by his own resources. Don Juan replied that he would do so immediately on the arrival of those seconds which he was daily expecting out of Spain. Ulrick's lord was determined to strike in on the side of the Spaniard at the first favourable opportunity. In the meantime he stood, watchful and vigilant, girt by every fighting man whom he could sustain and temporize with the President.

Why did O'Sullivan Bere alone of the gentlemen of Munster stand refused in this crisis? His reasons were wholly dynastic. The triumph of the Queen's cause would reduce him from the position of a practically independent chieftain to that of a plain owner of land. He had reason, too, to believe that those "Sons of the Knight," near kinsmen of the most powerful Royalist lord in the south of Ireland—the Lord Barry—Ulrick's King David—would supplant and ruin him.

During those days when the President of Munster and Red Hugh were at deadlock and glaring at each other at the Rising-ground of the Willow-trees, Ulrick, to his great joy, found himself again despatched to Cork by his lord. He was charged with the delivery of certain letters and messages.

He had acquitted himself so well on his first embassage that O'Sullivan felt no hesitation about entrusting him with many delicate commissions. Amongst his letters was one endorsed as follows:—"Let me be given to the noble woman of Captain Charles Egerton." It was from Lady O'Sullivan,

and conveyed her thanks and compliments to Mrs. Egerton for her kindness to Ulrick. Two well-filled hampers accompanied this letter, for no chief's wife in those days ever sent a letter without a present. The quaintness of the superscription is explainable by the fact that Lady O'Sullivan had dictated the letter in Irish, which some bad western scribe and interpreter converted literally into English. Now, there is no Irish equivalent of wife; a man's wife is simply his woman, as in French. It was dusk when Ulrick and his little convoy of laden garrans passed through the west gate of Cork. Ulrick thought that the whole of the Queen's army was at Kinsale, but was delighted to find the city filled with soldiers.

Having taken up his quarters at the old hostelry in Barrett Street, and after a hasty meal, Ulrick sallied forth, and went straight to Shandon Castle, where he inquired for Egerton, but was told that he had marched that day for Mallow, following the route of the President, who had gone northwards to fight with Red Hugh. The young officer who gave him this information, learning that he was a friend of Francis Egerton, invited him to his own room, produced wine, and otherwise played the part of the good-natured host. He had been, he said, at the taking of Rincorran Castle before Kinsale, and had come up to Cork in charge of the Spanish prisoners. He praised warmly the gallantry of Don Paez, commandant of that fort, and of the Spaniards in general. "The commonest Spanish soldier," he said, "hath a port of majesty, and beareth himself like a great gentleman." He was himself, he informed Ulrick, of

the sept of MacEgan, and an Ancient in Sir Thomas Butler's Tipperary Regiment. Ulrick, young, gay and frank, was, on his side, equally communicative, and a spirit of camaraderie and almost friendship, quickened by the flow, perhaps, of generous wine, grew up rapidly between the youths. The Ancient mourned at being kept in Cork, so far away from all the fun, and Ulrick lamented that his lord was so harassed by bad neighbours that he could not stir. Indeed, this the simple lad honestly believed. Presently two other officers entered, and with them the already amous Don Paez, wearing that sword which he valued more than life. In fact, this gentleman had sworn that he would bury himself in the ruins of Rincorran if he were not permitted to leave it with his sword. Curiously enough, the moment he was announced, Ulrick's eye glanced first at the sword. He was at large now on *parole* —a handsome, middle-aged man of gentle manners, slow and deliberate of speech, flaxen-haired, wearing a full "Abraham beard," and exhibiting altogether a reasonable share of that peculiar gravity for which his nation was so famous. Ulrick's host and the other officers contrived to hold some conversation with him in Spanish, a language easily learned, and of which, from intercourse with him and the other prisoners, they seemed to have already acquired a considerable command. Ulrick found himself very kindly treated by the Royalist officers. He enjoyed extremely the pleasant society into which he had fallen, and especially rejoiced in his good fortune in having met the brave Don Paez. One of the

officers, an Englishman, hearing that Ulrick was a friend of the Egertons, told him that Mistress Rachel Egerton had been very ill, but was now better, and that he had heard that she was going into the country for change of air, and that Lady Muskerry had to that end offered the family the use of one of her castles, which was situated upon a rock in the midst of the River Lee, a few miles from Cork.

Ulrick first grew pale, then blushed, as his manner was, and said,—

"There is a knowledge with me of that castle; I passed it this day riding to Cork."

Ulrick's broken English excited no amusement amongst these kindly and manly young fellows, but the notorious beauty of Mistress Rachel, taken together with the youth's pallor and blushing, did. Unseen by Ulrick, one of them smiled, and nodded at another.

In fact, the lad had quite revealed his secret, though he was not himself aware of the fact. One bottle now succeeded another, but Ulrick, who was never drunk in his life, and had made a vow with himself never to be, now got up and rather surprised his friends by the stately farewell which he took of his host and the whole company. It was almost like the breaking up of a camp.

His host accompanied him to the courtyard gate and gave the countersign to the sentry. After a second farewell, Ulrick departed, and as he wended his way homewards, passed through the street in which the Egertons resided, loitering there for a long time, and looking at the lights till they were extinguished.

He was up early and had finished most of his business before noon, which was the dinner hour in those times. He dined this day with a scarred old veteran, who, with half-a-dozen sons and nephews—warlike-looking youngsters—had but just arrived in Cork, not, however, without the knowledge of O'Sullivan Bere, who had it in his mind to arrange a three months' hiring with this martial sodality. They were of the sept of the Clan Sheehy, a famous fighting tribe of uncertain origin, I think Scotch.

Ulrick had an oral message for this veteran, with which we need not concern ourselves. The veteran gave Ulrick a good dinner, and finding him an excellent listener, thought to keep him drinking and talking all the afternoon.

But he was disappointed. Ulrick did not much like the breed of professional soldiers, though he did, as we know, entertain an old friendship for Long Walter the Gallowglass. In the interest of his lord he was courteous and respectful to that grizzly son of Mars and his warlike brood, but contrived to make his escape shortly after dinner.

Thence he returned to his lodgings, and making himself as brave outwardly as might be, and, indeed, through the generosity of his lord, he was as sumptuously dressed as any youth, not a noble, to be met with in the city, he sallied forth once more to wait on Mrs. Egerton, this time with a sorely beating heart.

A comely youth, neatly clad in the picturesque Irish costume, viz. trunk-hose, saffron-coloured shirt, plaited from waist to knee, with long hanging sleeves and clean, red woollen mantle,

followed him, leading a pony and baskets laden with Lady O'Sullivan's present to Mrs. Egerton. When he was ushered into the sitting-room there was only one person there; it was Rachel Egerton. She was thinner and paler than when he last saw her, but he thought more beautiful; the bright, bold flashing style of her beauty had changed to something softer and more appealing. She was sitting in an easy chair before the fire, wrapped as became an invalid, and with some description of needlework in her hands. When she saw him a flush overspread her pale face—invalids will flush at the least occasion for excitement—and offered to rise, but he prevented her. Love is always fearful; it was some time before Ulrick could quite compose himself. Eventually he succeeded, and conversed freely about her brother, about the valiant Don Paez, about his dear lady and mistress, at which even this Puritan maiden's countenance fell ever so slightly, and other matters of little moment or of none. Embarrassed, however, the lad was, and profoundly aware that his talk was most dull and formal. Presently Mrs. Egerton and the younger sister entered, both of whom received our friend with much kindness.

When Ulrick mentioned what the English officer had informed him, Mrs. Egerton said that it was true that Lady Muskerry had been very kind, and had even promised to send her own "chariot" to bring them to the castle in question, and mentioned the day of setting out. Ulrick enlarged on the beauty of the River Lee at that place, how the castle was situated on a rock in

the midst of the river, and looked up the river and down, and in short gave them a very graphic and pleasing picture of the place. Becoming bolder, he said that the day of their setting out would be the very same on which he would return, that his way lay too along the banks of the Lee; and, in fine, begged permission to accompany the party. Mrs. Egerton, who from the first liked the youth, gladly consented. It seemed to Ulrick—love will build castles out of nothing—that the invalid's eyes gave a sudden flash of pleasure at this arrangement. Mrs. Egerton also invited Ulrick to share their evening meal on the following day. He did so, and departed to his lodgings more deeply in love than ever. He was now, I regret to say, playing fast and loose with his master's interests. In two days, or three at the utmost, he might have despatched his business, and set out for home. He had now bound himself not to return for a week. The rest of the time he spent in a manner very much to his mind. Through the kindness of the officers at Shandon Castle he secured permission to visit the camp at Kinsale. He rode thither, gave up his letters to a certain Captain Flower, who showed him much kindness, saw some of that interminable trench-fighting, and also, what pleased him far better, the bombarding of Castle ny-park by the great warships of the Queen also an attempt upon the castle with the mantelet, which was a very lively affair while it lasted. Ulrick was greatly delighted with these experinces of war on a large scale, and also surmised or hoped that his lord would forgive his dilatoriness when

he should hear so much news, for the Chieftain was at this time keenly interested in everything that was taking place at Kinsale.

During these three days there was a terribly severe frost.

He returned to Cork on the evening before the Egertons' departure, and next morning at the appointed hour presented himself at their house, looking as handsome, as happy, and as gallant as any lady could desire her escort to be. Before the door stood Lady Muskerry's great gilded Elizabethan state-chariot, drawn by six splendid horses with outriders. There were two mounted servants in front of the cavalcade, wearing the Clan-Carty livery, with lances in their hands. Behind the coach came a palanquin or litter furnished with a canopy and curtains, borne by two horses. Two other horsemen closed the procession. Ulrick waited patiently till the travellers came out, when he descended from his horse to meet them. He was pleased to find not only that Miss Egerton was now quite restored to health, but that in spite of the frost she had insisted upon riding in the litter, and that Mrs. Egerton, after many demurs, had been obliged to consent. Though it had frozen hard during the night, the morning was beautifully fine and sunny.

Their road for a considerable distance lay along the shores of the Lee. Ulrick pointed out the spot where the gallant Sir Warham St. Leger, President of Munster, and the gallant Lord Maguire, Tyrone's master of the horse, had fought and fallen, reverently raising his hat and riding bare-

headed past the spot. He told her strange old-world legends about the Lee; legends, however, which he believed, and which the young lady almost or altogether believed too, for it was still a believing age—receptive, enthusiastic, imaginative, and not critical. Further on, at Iniscarra, a picturesque spot, he pointed out the traces of Tyrone's great encampment there some eighteen months since, showed her the stone upon which Earl Florence had been inaugurated as M'Cartie More, and the place where stood the tent in which he and his brother had been confined. "My lord," he added proudly, "was the only Irish lord in the province who dared deny the summons of Tyrone to that parliament, though the Arch-Earl threatened him."

"Have you forgotten King David?" asked his fair companion archly.

"Not so, truly. But the Barries are English."

"Why, I thought that the Barries have been in this realm time out of mind."

"Not so, O lady. They came as it were yesterday, for they have been here for only five hundred years."

While they talked and gently ambled forward or walked—for Lady Muskerry's chariot was a heavy load even for six horses—the silver-flowing, winding Lee kept them company, the Sabrann, as Ulrick called it, alleging that he loved old names which were not spoiled by common usage. For one at least, perhaps for both (I cannot undertake to tell what was in Miss Rachel's mind), it was a happy time. The morning air was fresh and clear, the rime glittered on the grass and naked trees

and the frozen ground rang like iron under the hoofs of the horses. Youth, love, and hope, all manner of intoxicating influences were abroad. One thought not so complimentary to Ulrick did, I know, obtrude itself sometimes on the young lady's mind; it was that her companion was rather a promising boy than a man. But the promising boy had a good deal of manly stuff in him, too, of which there was good proof ere long.

Ulrick and Rachel had fallen some distance behind the rest of the party. The lady desired to contemplate at more leisure a particularly beautiful bend of the river, and had just observed that Spenser might have written more about the Lee than the bald assertion that it enclosed Cork "like an island fair with his divided flood," when a loud and peremptory command in Irish rang through the still air.

"Halt, dismount, give up your horses in the name of the Queen."

Ulrick at once rode forward to the scene of disturbance, as he did so rapidly shifting his shield from back to breast. Some four or five horsemen mounted on shaggy garrans, but with no other signs of equestrianism or knighthood about them, had gathered in front of the cavalcade, having descended upon the main road from a bye-way leading from the north.

The suddenness of the attack, the fierceness and wild demeanour of the assailants, and their challenge, "In the Queen's name," had for the moment nonplussed the few serving-men of the party, though they were well mounted and well armed. The postillions were already tumbling

out of their saddles. Ulrick, seeing the situation, called loudly to the mounted men to follow, and himself, with lowered lance, charged straight at the wild-looking cavalry. The mounted servants did as they were bid. The postillions drew their swords and followed—even the horse-boys went bravely after brandishing their sticks. The banditti, for they seemed no less, did not await the onset; they jumped their ponies over a low fence, and galloped across a boggy sort of field, which, however, upheld them and their little horses well enough. Satisfied with the result Ulrick checked his men from further pursuit, returned, and informed Mrs. Egerton that the danger was over. Neither she nor the younger lady, however, showed any signs of terror, though the situation for a moment seemed alarming enough. He now bade the postillions ride fast, and returning to Miss Rachel, made light of the whole matter, saying that it was some mistake that, perhaps, without their knowledge, the Commandant at Cork had ordered a requisitioning of horses in the Lee Valley. All now hurried on rapidly, and without further adventure, yet Ulrick was heartily glad when he saw rise before him the white turrets of Carrig-a-droghid Castle and the peaceful smoke ascending thence into the still air. The castle was of considerable size, built upon an island in the midst of the Lee, where the river foamed and roared in its descent through a rocky gorge. Here a bridge spanned the river, passing close beside the castle, of which it seemed almost to be a portion. Hence the name, Carrig-a-droghid, the Castle of the Bridge; it is still extant

and in good preservation. At either end of the bridge there was a gate which was protected by a gate-tower. The portcullis at the near end was up, and the Constable of the Castle and his men were standing in front of it to receive Lady Muskerry's friends and guests. Ulrick entered with the party, and as soon as he found an opportunity, informed the Constable of what had taken place. The Constable rejected the explanation that the Queen's people had been requisitioning horses, saying that any such step without Lord Muskerry's consent, duly notified to the whole country, would be an act of war upon his lordship. It was certainly, he said, an irruption of woodkerne or banditti out of another county. Yet even that explanation did not seem satisfactory, for all the neighbouring territories were in profound peace. The Constable bade Ulrick stay for dinner, which was served in the highest chamber of the castle, a large room furnished with wide windows, and commanding a beautiful view of the river and the adjacent country on all sides. Immediately after dinner Ulrick took his leave. His next stopping-place that night would be at Inchigeela, at a castle there owned by a gentleman of the O'Leary sept, a hill clan holding the country, round the sources of the Lee. They were followers of the Lord Muskerry. The Constable did not offer an escort, and Ulrick was too proud to ask for one. At parting, Mrs. Egerton spoke of him as "our deliverer," while Rachel's eyes looked the same sentiment.

Ulrick left that castle perfectly stupid and dazed with love, his eyes blinded with tears, so that for

some minutes he was aware of nothing but of the beautiful vision which shone before his dreaming mind.

> "His path he could hardly discern;
> So sweetly she bade him adieu,
> He thought that she bade him return."

He was awakened by the sharp metallic clang and crash of the great portcullis of the bridge-head rushing down behind him. Just then an equestrian whose horse was blowing hard and was all spattered with foam, rode past him and cried sharply,—

"Hast thou heard the news?"

"No," said Ulrick, not yet roused from his dazed and drowned condition.

"Hugh Roe hath broken a great battle on the Lord President and the Lord Barry in the north of Ormond. The remnant of the Queen's host is flying through the midst of Ormond with Hugh Roe behind in hot pursuit."

"Her eyes looked it, though her tongue never spoke," said Ulrick. "Sir, I thank thee for thy courtesy." He raised his hat as he spoke with much gravity, and rode forward, or rather his horse bore him forward.

CHAPTER VIII.

HUGH ROE.

THE horseman who had just communicated this startling intelligence looked after Ulrick's slowly retreating figure with a puzzled expression, then rode up to the gate-tower, and hailed the warder. He was a professional newsman—one of a considerable and important class—the newspaper of the day, printer, correspondent, editor, etc., all rolled into one. There was a statute law of the realm directed against these newsbringers and spreaders of rumours, yet they flourished mightily in the land, so great was the appetite of men for news, and were welcomed and entertained wherever they went.

Ulrick, in spite of his *mal-apropos* reply to that equestrian newsmonger, had actually absorbed, though without realising it, the startling intelligence communicated. At the moment there were, in fact, two Ulricks under one hat; one immersed in visions and love's sweet sorrow, the other recording the words of the newsbringer. The two Ulricks presently coalesced, and the news assumed a lively prominence in his mind. "Hugh Roe victorious in a great battle; Hugh Roe pursuing Sir George Carew and Lord Barry, the Queen's

regulars and the gentlemen of Munster through the midst of Ormond." That was news indeed. Ulrick took one last glance at the castle which held Rachel, gave spurs to his horse and plunged at a gallop into a wood which here surrounded the road, lining the north bank of the Lee. It was only two o'clock in the afternoon, but the place was shady, even dim, owing to the height and multitude of the trees. A drove of ponies and garrans here met him coming from the West. Ulrick hardly noticed them or the men who were with them; he was still dazed and dreaming. He was half way past the herd when he became aware that his course was stopped, that the horses filled the narrow way and prevented passage. He sat up angrily and looked around. Just then a sharp voice in Gaelic, of a strange idiom, and not quite incomprehensible, rang out, reverberating through the hollows of the forest,—

"Surrender, or thou art a dead man."

Suddenly Ulrick, now alive to the finger tips, was aware that some dozen bows full-bent, and with arrows on the string, were ranged alongside the way a few paces from where he stood, all pointed straight at his breast, and behind them strange, wild faces and bright eyes. Amongst the bows were two or three crossbows, bent too, with their little leaden quarrels ready to fly.

"Ware sword-grip, thou fool!" repeated the same voice, for Ulrick had instinctively dropped his hand towards the hilt of his sword, letting fall his horseman's staff as an unsuitable weapon in such an emergency, and, indeed, a mere incumbrance. Ulrick saw at once that escape was

impossible. There were a dozen deaths not to be avoided ranged there beside him, ready to fly upon him at one word from the man who had challenged him, the commander of these depredators or banditti.

"I surrender," said Ulrick.

"Then thy sword, man. Use haste."

Ulrick unbuckled his sword-belt, and handed it with the weapon and its furniture to a tall young man who now stepped to his side. Down at once went that row of bows, and the convoy began to move forward. The road behind Ulrick as well as the road in front had been blocked with horses —he had been taken in a trap. The young man who took his sword was a handsome youth, reddish-haired, tall, bright-eyed, and alert-looking, apparently a gentleman. He wore a little close-fitting cap, broad in front, narrowing to a point behind. It was decorated with a single black feather. Otherwise, too, his attire and general equipment were strange to Ulrick.

He wore a thick mantle in a roll round his breast and shoulders, a striped petticoat, and red deerskin buskins; but his knees were quite bare. On his left arm he carried a target. Over his left shoulder projected the great hilt of a two-handed sword.

"Shall we gyve him, O Son of Macleod?" said one of the archers.

"Ay, gyve him."

Ulrick looked in amazement at the speaker. What was the Son of Macleod, from the far Hebrides, doing in these parts? The Hebrideans were, indeed, noted pirates. This was probably

a raiding party from a Hebridean fleet which had put in somewhere on the west coast.

He questioned his captor as to the nature of this seizure, and offered to show the written protection and free pass which he held of the Lord Muskerry.

"The Lord Muskerry," answered the Son of Macleod with a laugh. "I serve one who keeps better men than the Lord Muskerry. Get thee on the back of this beast," indicating one of the small garrans; "he will not run away with thee. Thou art Saxon, I warrant, and one of Carew's people, for all thy bad Gaelic. *Brusthig* there, *brusthig*"—i.e. haste, haste.

As he rode away to the head of the convoy, he cried back to the men whom he left in charge of Ulrick, "Sword him if he play the questioner."

A Highlander led Ulrick's pony by the bridle, and two others ran one on either side of him. The procession swept on through the wood. At the next meeting of roads they left the highway and turned to the north by a narrow way which led up the flank of a ridge covered with small oaks. Soon they entered a country with which Ulrick had no acquaintance. He did not know whither they were going—they seemed to know well themselves. These marauding Highlanders were evidently in no want of guides. At one point they passed by a castle which commanded the road. The people of the castle could have barred the passage had they chosen. Not a shot, however, was fired from the loopholes. The courtyard gate was open, and a gentleman, with a few unarmed servants, stood in the gate, between whom and the young leader of the marauding

party friendly salutations were exchanged. The banditti seemed to have already established alliances in this country. The sun was setting at the time, but Ulrick thought he recognised this gentleman as a member of the sept of M'Donough. If that were so, he was now in the Duhallow country, and in the vicinity of the Blackwater. The sun set, the moon rose, and the stars came out bright and clear, scintillating with frost, for it was freezing hard. The frozen way rang with the clanking of the horses' hoofs and the loud clattering of the running Highlanders, well shod with brogues soled with wood and iron. Then they crossed a great river by a broad ford—it was the Blackwater—and set off again more briskly than before, still going due northwards. These people, thought Ulrick, may be acting in concert with Hugh Roe, supporting Hugh Roe here from the west out of the sea, while he invades by way of Ormond. Two hours after sundown they made their first halt. It was before a small group of cottages, enclosed by a rampart and moat. The owner and his men stood by the wayside. There were women who offered the Highlanders bread and milk. There was also an open barrel of ale, and men beside it holding wooden cups and four-cornered *methers* in their hands, with which they scooped up the liquor, and held it towards the thirsty banditti. The delay was only for a few minutes. On they went again, after quenching their thirst, the Highlanders munching their junks of bread as they ran.

It may have been two hours after this when Ulrick became aware that another marauding

party of a similar character had joined them, striking in by a side road. Not long afterwards he saw, far ahead, the whole country illuminated with fires, and heard a great hum and clamour of confused voices, as if a multitude were congregated here. It seemed as if all the clans of the highlands were joined in this invasion. A horse-boy passed close to Ulrick, leading a horse—not a garran, or even a roadster, such as that which Ulrick had himself of late ridden, but a gigantic beast, a chie horse, a horse of service, groomed to perfection, and caracoling, plunging, and neighing as he went. What had the Highlanders to do with war-horses? Then he saw the gleam of brass; it shone from the brazen morions of a file of foot-soldiers. They were marching in good order, with calyvers on their shoulders, and match burning at their girdles. Now tents began to grow frequent on either side of the way, most of them rude structures of branches, grass, and sods, some few of leather or sail-cloth. Ever and anon he passed huge fires round which soldiers sat or reposed. Then Ulrick's captor, "the Son of Macleod," drew to his side, and bade him dismount and follow. Still gyved, Ulrick went with the young man, who strode away with long steps through the camp, while Ulrick succeeding, wondered at, and indeed rather admired, his captor, as he went moving knee after knee, and with a fine swinging motion of his loose petticoats. He paused before a tent made of many pieces of leather, deftly hooked or otherwise fastened. Round this tent were grouped soldiers of a superior type, tall, handsome, and exhibiting a certain

gravity of aspect. Here, too, were horsemen sitting still on their horses. Ulrick's captor gave him in charge to a file of soldiers standing at the tent door, and disappeared into the interior.

Ulrick, turning round, watched the scene with interest and curiosity. The men grouped round the fires were taking their supper. From group to group at each fire there went men carrying bags of meal and keeves of butter. As they approached, a soldier would hold out his helmet which the distributors of meal duly filled. Some one else then scooping up a great slab of butter flung it on the top of the meal, and the soldier retired. This was his supper. After this came the kneading into cakes and the baking. The soldiers seemed each to have little griddles of their own. Great vessels containing milk stood in various places, from which the men helped themselves as they had occasion. He watched everything with much curiosity. eager to get some clue as to the nature and purpose of this invading army, which had marched so far inland from the sea without sending in front any premonitory symptoms of its approach. He found no clue, but felt that his curiosity would soon be allayed.

The young Scotchman now came out, and bade him follow him into the tent. The entrance was dark, but his guide, drawing aside a curtain, revealed an immense inner compartment, which was brilliantly illuminated with large candles, well-trimmed and bright. For a moment the glare was too great to permit even a friend to distinguish clearly objects and persons there. Then he became aware that all eyes were directed

towards a figure standing alone at the further end of the chamber. It was that of a very young man, a very handsome young man, who with a smile and in a gentle and gracious manner seemed to give audience to a still younger man whom he had just raised from his knees, and to hear whose petition he now stood attentive, and smiled in an encouraging manner. Upon this young captain of Hebridean banditti, or whatever he might be, Ulrick's eyes were soon fixed and riveted. It was obvious enough that this youth was the central point and commanding influence in the great host which lay camped here. His complexion was white and ruddy, even brilliantly so, and his expression so vivid with intelligence, so frank, kindly, and pleasing, that even at the first glance our hero felt arise within him a curious emotion of regard, trust, and admiration. His eyes, which were large and full, and set well apart, seemed in this light to be dark—they were, in fact, grey. He wore a small moustache and short peaked beard. His hair, which was long, rolled copiously over his shoulders ; it was red—not a deep red, but rather a deep shade of auburn, still lighter, and almost gold where it started from his white temples. His long mantle was scarlet, glittering along the edges with little points of gold called aigulettes, and provided with a cape of some soft white fur. It was fastened over his breast with a gold clasp. This mantle had no sleeves, and as it swept away from the shoulders, the whole figure of the wearer was clearly seen, which was that of a slender, but vigorous and well-formed man, lithe, active, and strong. The gentle

expression of the countenance was corrected by the effect of the low, straight brows ridged over the eyes, a nose inclined to the aquiline, and generally a latent look of energy and decision, something which suggested habits of command.

"Thou art no stranger to me, Art Roe," he said, in a voice clear, full, and sweet; a voice which our hero, already fascinated, compared in his own mind to the subdued sound of a trumpet. "Thou art no stranger to me; thou wert with the chief bard of Thomond when he came to me about that seizure of his possessions. Have any of my men wronged thee?"

As he spoke, that latent look of imperiousness for one moment was patent.

"Yes, if it please your lordship. Four garrans, a hackney, and one carriage."

"Who went out this day into M'Cartie More's country?" said the young captain.

When he was informed, he said in a louder voice—"Let all his possessions be restored to Art Roe, the Rhymer, and, for every thing taken, let there be given him, in addition, another of equal value as an *eric*. Let no man, at his peril, from this day forth trouble in person or estate, any rhymer, physician, cleric, or any professor of curious or learned arts; and thou, Art, let it go forth from thee, amongst all thy fellow-professors, that no man hath ever entered Leth-Mogha with a more beneficent intent towards all the sacred race of historians, and poets, and learned men in general than ourselves."

"My lord, I have brought thee a laudatory poem," said the rhymer, drawing forth from his

bosom a paper, from which, without waiting for a sign of assent, he commenced to read,—

"Like the moon among the small, faint lights of Heaven,
So is Hugh among the captains;
Like a mantle of royal purple amongst rags,
So is—"

"Our thanks to thee, O Art, for thy sweet and commendable paper of laudatory verses. They shall be read to us at our greater leisure. Thou, our seneschal, see that the rhymer be suitably rewarded. Bring forward Fergus Duff, grandson of O'Boyle."

There was a movement amongst those who stood around Ulrick, and a fine-looking, middle-aged man, gyved like Ulrick, and wearing a stern and gloomy expression, was led forward into the vacant space. At a sign from the chieftain a young man who was seated at a table covered with writing implements, rose and read aloud from a small and crumpled piece of paper,—

"To the Lord Barry, these:—

"There is an ill-guarded way at the rear of this camp, where the willows stand thick, and one pine tree high overtoppeth the stunted willows, easily distinguishable, the more so because—"

"Enough," cried the young chief, now all imperiousness, his eyes flashing again with wrath, before which, however, that gyved man never quailed. "Is that letter thine?"

"My lord," said the other, in a firm and manly voice, "I perceive that death is very near me, and I will not lie. The letter is mine."

"What have I ever done to thee or thine, O Fergus, son of Fergus?" cried the chief, with a voice that seemed like a wail, while tears sprang to his eyes, "what have I done to thee or thine that thou shouldst seek to destroy me, and give me over for a prey to the Lords Barry and Carew?"

"An ancient amity with the Barry," answered the prisoner, gloomily, "a vow of close and enduring friendship even from our boyish days." The chief now called to his side to or three of his officers. After a short consultation they retired, and the chieftain spoke again, this time in low, solemn tones,—

"Almighty God and His dear Son may forgive thee, O man; but I cannot—not even if I would. Provost Marshal, the prisoner is thine."

"Win victory and blessings," said the other, "it is a just doom."

The soldiers who guarded him thereupon led him away. With the gloomy procession went a tall and stern-looking man, round whose shoulders in many coils hung a strong cord. It was the Provost Marshal.

For some seconds there was silence. The young chief seemed to recover himself with an effort. Then he said, quietly,—

"Son of Macleod, thy Saxon prisoner."

As Ulrick was led forward the chief looked at him intently. "Remove his gyves," he said. As soon as this was done, and Ulrick seemingly in an attitude of composure, he resumed, "Art thou a Saxon, or in the service of the Lord Carew?" His manner was not unkindly, gracious rather, and as if he desired to inspire confidence.

"Neither," said Ulrick, "I am one of the gentlemen of the Lord O'Sullivan, O'Sullivan Bere, passing lawfully on my lord's business through Muskerry on the protection and safe-conduct of M'Cartie, captain of the same. I was taken prisoner by thy people, and deprived of my freedom and my weapons, and my lord's horse."

The chief smiled, for Ulrick had expressed himself with some heat, and as though he menaced that presence with the displeasure of M'Cartie Muskerry, a great name in Munster.

"Thy freedom, thy weapons, and thy lord's horse shall be restored to thee," said the other; "and thou shalt have a horse of thy own, to boot, for an *eric*, and our protection and safe-conduct, instead of M'Cartie Muskerry's. Thou shalt be our messenger, and convey our written commendations to the noble and puissant Lord O'Sullivan Bere, and shalt give out on all sides that not for plunder and oppression have we entered the province, for we have taken and will take nothing here save necessary supplies, keeping a strict account of all requisitionings to the day of reckoning; that we have come hither to give freedom and power to the lords of Munster, each within his own territory, and to break from their necks the yoke of strangers and tyrants, and to exalt the overthrown and persecuted Church of God and His Son, to Whom be glory for ever.

And thou shalt give it out on all sides that as we were the first to come into this province to our great charge and manifest peril, relinquishing the prosecution of our own insurgents and a great host of the people of the Queen, not looking to the

right hand or to the left, but coming straight and swift at the first summons, so we look to it that the lords and gentlemen of West Munster shall league with us, and lie on our peace, and not on that of O'Neill or any other. Let the young gentleman have his safe-conduct now in hand, and let him be well entertained this night, at our proper cost, and well sped whensoever it shall please him to depart."

A small round bit of parchment was immediately handed to him by the secretary, showing at the foot a green seal stamped with arms, and beside it a name in large letters.

"O, Rigdamna," said Ulrick, glancing from the document to the youth who had just delivered that quasi-kingly harangue. "I know not to whose camp I have been led a prisoner, or whose name standeth below this scripture."

"Enough, enough!" said the young Scotch gentleman, Son of Macleod. ""Thy words are too many. Make thy obeisance, and come with me. Thou art my guest from this forth."

The Scotch gentleman's language was rough, but his manner friendly.

Ulrick dropped on one knee, rose lightly, and followed his conductor.

"Who is he?" said Ulrick, pausing when they passed the curtain, and facing round to the young Macleod.

"Well, thou art a simpleton. Man, it is O'Donnell, Hugh Roe, son of Hugh, son of Manus."

"But how came he hither out of North Ormond?'

"On the wind's wing, mayhap," said the other.

"Is it not known to thee that he hath deer's feet?"

Just then, for they were at the tent door, the blaze of the countless watch-fires, thick as stars, flashed in Ulrick's eyes. Rapt, astonished, and filled with strange emotions, in silence he followed his host and conductor through the great camp.

CHAPTER IX.

FAIN WOULD I CLIMB.

I HAVE related how Carew, with Lord Barry as second in command, was detached from the camp at Kinsale and sent to the frontier of Munster in the hope that he might crush Hugh Roe before Tyrone could come to his assistance. The two great northern captains were at the time, but with diverse degrees of speed, marching southwards to effect a junction with Don Juan at Kinsale, but Hugh Roe going with characteristic velocity appeared on the Munster frontier many days before the Earl. Carew, commanding a much larger army than his young antagonist, met the latter in the north of Tipperary, but found the young barbarian occupying a position so well chosen and fortified with so much military art, that he did not dare to assail him. Hugh was encamped upon a rising ground called the Ridge of the Willow Trees, on three sides possessing great natural advantages for defence, and on the fourth or northward side in free communication with a rich and well-inhabited country, which he had reduced to submission. It was here that Fergus Duff sought to betray him, as related.

One night, leaving his camp-fires burning, Hugh

Roe gave Carew the slip, and marching as only he could march, descended without premonitory symptoms into West Munster. It was a party of Hugh Roe's loose people that frightened Mrs. Egerton and her escort as they rode from Cork up the Lee Valley, and gave our hero that opportunity of showing the metal of which he was made. By another troop thrown off too from the same host, Ulrick was taken captive in the manner described and conducted into Hugh Roe's presence.

Ulrick was now very eager to come a second time into the same presence. He ardently desired to secure from that potent youth, now, from this time forward, sure to be the dominant influence in all West Munster, a protection for Mrs. Egerton and her daughters while they remained in Carrig-a-droghid, and a safe-conduct for their return to Cork.

Young Macleod, who as a host and pleasant comrade was now all that Ulrick could desire, assured him that while it was impossible to bring him again into the presence of Hugh Roe, he himself would undertake to procure the desired protection and safe-conduct, and even offered himself as an escort to the ladies. "And my own protection," he said, "which I pledge, giving my right hand upon the promise, is, I think, sufficient, for I have here nine score men of war, lacking six, under my own command, all Macleods, shot, gallowglass, and kerne, and a plump of horse besides, and I think there are not many who would dare meddle with aught that is beneath my targe, as I go down the Lee Valley safe-conducting thy star of knowledge.

Young Macleod took a few turns through the tent after the delivery of this speech, looking very fierce and warlike, so that Ulrick, whose training had tended much more to self-repression and modesty, could not forbear a smile.

In one direction, however, as is evident, he had been unable to achieve complete reticence in the society of this transparently simple, brave, upright and kindly young Highland lord. His extreme solicitude concerning the welfare of these ladies, his admission that they were not relatives, and the tremor and bated breath with which he referred to the eldest daughter of Mrs. Egerton, effectually revealed his condition to his young host, who chanced to be a lover himself, an unsuccessful one to boot, and whose heart was quickly stirred to a tender sympathy with Ulrick. Later on, Macleod's chief officers began to drop in for supper, and the interesting colloquy and exchange of tender thoughts between the young men came to an end, so far as spoken words were concerned, for Macleod bade Ulrick sit at his right hand at supper, and several times during the repast, and the subsequent boisterous talk and deep drinking, pressed our hero's hand tenderly as an assurance of sympathy and a renewal of the pledge. Ulrick retired early from a scene of uproar which was anything but agreeable to a lover, a grave-looking, middle-aged Highlander conducting him to his night-quarters. Here he found a hut of sods and branches allotted altogether to himself and provided with more luxuries than he had anticipated, for there was a bed and bed-blanket, and a keeve of water sparkling in the torchlight. A soap-ball

lay beside it on the ground in a wooden dish, and a clean towel hung from one of the roofbranches. The bed was of heather and chopped furze in dense layers upon a foundation of stones. It was provided with a pillow, too, over which lay a linen coverlet. The man who made that bed called himself "groom of the chamber to the son of Macleod."

Here, Ulrick divesting himself of his outer garments, folded around him the great blanket, laid his head on the pillow, and with the odour of fresh heather in his nostrils, the hum and roar of the mighty camp in his ears, and in his mind visions and dreams, and many half-religious, half-chivalrous imaginings and aspirations very pure and very unselfish, fell fast asleep.

He did not on this occasion pass beyond Bantry, where he found his lord still encamped, commanding an army of one thousand soldiers, which, for the time, was really a great host. All O'Sullivan land was now in the chief's possession, for he had quite conquered those sons of the knight, the Queen's O'Sullivans, with whose open-air Parliament our story commenced. O'Sullivan had stormed, captured or destroyed all their castles and fastnesses. They and the remnant of their men were now with Carew, at Kinsale, having been incorporated into the army of Munster. As to the war operations there, the moment Carew and his army returned from that bootless enterprise of seeking to repel Hugh Roe from Munster, it was determined by the Council to order a grand bombardment of Kinsale by sea and land. This was done, and upon a great scale, but came to

nothing. The bombardment did little harm to the Spaniards, and wasted a great deal of the Queen's ammunition. Then it was determined to batter the north port to pieces and storm Kinsale by the breach so made. This attempt, too, came to nothing, such was the valour and determination of the defenders. Then it was resolved to make a breach in the walls on the west side and storm Kinsale from that side. Trenches were swiftly dug there, for time pressed and the northern lords were nigh at hand, a platform raised, great culverins were drawn or about to be drawn into position. Then night fell. It was expected that Don Juan would sally that night, and at the old works on the north side and at the new on the west strong bodies of foot and horse were posted to repel him. Night fell, wild and rainy. At "eight of the clock" that night the Spaniard sallied, amid driving rain, roaring wind, and darkness that might be felt. He broke platforms, spiked guns, filled in trenches, wrecked wholly the Royalist siege operations, and would have ruined the Queen's host and changed the course of history but for young Clanricarde, Chief of the High Burkes of the West, and his Connaught-Irish, "for he it was who forced the Spaniards back into Kinsale that night." But our concern is not with these large themes.

Ulrick, with his glittering and martial escort supplied by Hugh Roe, set forth in the evening of the next day and returned along the same road by which the son of Macleod had conducted him so unceremoniously to the insurgent camp. As he went, the various lords and gentlemen through

whose countries he passed came out with their horsemen to conduct him to the borders of their estates, for he was everywhere preceded by outriding horsemen, as was customary when great persons travelled Ulrick was now one whom Hugh Roe delighted to honour, and since that affair at Droum Saillach, Hugh Roe's was a name to conjure with over all this country; whether they liked it or not, all the chief men here felt it their interest to cultivate the friendliest relations with the young northern warrior. So from Hugh Roe's camp Ulrick returned somewhat in the style of a prince. He was royally entertained by M'Donough, of Duhallow, upon the way, who, besides other gifts, presented him with a fine chief horse, horse of service, or war-horse, a colt, untrained, but with a skin like a mirror, and attended by two horse-boys, also a gift to the lad, for a mild form of slavery still obtained in Ireland.

It was nearly midnight when Ulrick at last struck the main high road which led from Cork along the banks of the Lee into his own country. This road he struck at a point about half a mile westward from the Castle of the Bridge, Carrig-a-droghid, that island-strength lying in the midst of the Sabrann, and holding just now the fairest, purest, and most radiant of all the maidens of the earth. Here Ulrick thought to make a detour and deliver his tidings at the castle gate, viz., "The son of Macleod hath passed me his word to safeguard the Egertons as far as the west port of Cork," but ere long perceived many reasons why he should not. The ward would conceive a distrust of him returning in the midst of rebel

horse, and his own escort would be displeased to hear him parleying at the gates of a Royalist fortress.

Nevertheless, Ulrick, animated by emotions not easy to define, and dim enough even to himself, bade the escort await his return, and proceeding on foot, made his way to the bank of the river, and following its course, drew nearer and nearer to the tall castle, which showed dark and minatory against the grey woods and the starry sky. At first, perhaps, he merely wished to contemplate in silence and solitude the stream-surrounded pile, within which lay that beautiful and high-souled Puritan maiden, before whose lustre his pretty Sheela in the west had paled and dwindled as it were into blue space. The gliding river murmured at his feet, otherwise the night was perfectly still, save for the pawing of the impatient horses of his escort on the hard road behind. In the tall castle one window only showed a light; it seemed to be on the second story, that which was immediately above the great hall. Ulrick drew nearer, halting and hesitating, yet ever advancing. Every step brought him at least nearer to his beloved. Then a thought arose in his love-perturbed soul, "I would kiss the sacred pile ere I pass westward, perhaps to see it and her no more, and of ivy which grows there take one sacred leaf." So thinking, he slid noiselessly into the ice-cold water—it was not cold to him—and allowed the current to bear him to the island on which the castle stood. All here was in shadow, for the moon shone in the east, while Ulrick came from the west. He crept up to the castle and kissed

the cold stones. Perhaps they felt and understood his passion—who knows? There are those who maintain that life permeates all things, and that soul and intelligence are everywhere. An ivy leaf? Yes, ivy was abundant here, here just beneath that little window which might be *hers*, and the clinging ivy tendrils and stems here grew strong, strong enough to upbear a less active and expert climber than Ulrick the Ready—for the lad, clasping the stout ivy ropes with his nervous fingers, climbed. It was the height of imprudence on Ulrick's part, an action unusual, improper, and unwarrantable, and he knew it, nevertheless climbed. The ivy leaves rustled around him as he went.

"Doubtless," said Ulrick to himself, "one of the officers of the ward, mayhap the constable himself, is there where the light shineth. I shall apprize him that the castle and all within it are henceforth secure from peril and molestation, seeing what passed between myself and the son of Macleod, and the credit which I enjoy with Hugh Roe."

So he said; but below this thought, which formed itself into unuttered words, there was another, which did not form itself into words. Then, through the dense boscage in which he was now embowered, he saw where, on his left hand, certain leaves showed bright and glossy, upon which the lamp-light from that open window fell. He moved a little in that direction. As he did so, he was aware that his heart was pounding and beating terribly. Surely it was not the thought of the constable or of "one of the officers of the ward" which converted his breast into such a drum. He stood now motionless within the

dense ivy, supporting himself with feet and hands, and only a few inches of the embrasure ; his heart drumming in that terrible fashion, his whole being a-tremble, vibrating like a plucked and quivering harp-string.

Ulrick, son of Shane, son of Randal, as he delighted to call himself, was not, as we know, one of the timorous sort ; yet there is that which is clear as the moon, glorious as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners, which will set men trembling who never trembled to war's alarms. Ulrick, so shrouded in dense leafage, clung there without motion other than those astonishing internal quiverings and vibrations. From within came no sound, from without only the slumberous lapse of waters, where the Sabrann of bright streams slid murmuring to the sea. He began to feel his position as false as it was foolish. With what object he had climbed thither he could not himself explain upon any rational principle. It was not to look in, for he was here now, and not for an instant did the thought that he could pry or spy here cross his mind. He was about to descend, having accomplished this foolish and even dangerous feat, when he heard a book close, and after that a gentle sigh. In the intense stillness the sound was very clear and distinct, and such are love's preternaturally acute sensations, that Ulrick was aware at once from whose beautiful spirit emanated that gentle expression of sorrow or sentiment. After that he heard low, sweet tones : it was the voice of a maiden uttering the impromptu soul-felt prayer of Puritan piety. Six words had not been uttered when, with a start

which almost caused him to quit his hold, our hero heard his own name, his very own worthless name, breathed by those pure lips which were all the world to him. Rachel Egerton, having entered into her chamber and having shut the door, prayed to her heavenly Father who is in secret, and she prayed for *him*. Tides of ecstatic, unspeakable joy rose in the depths of his soul and flooded all his being in that moment. But other thoughts succeeded, swiftly, on the instant. What did he do there, prying, listening at the door of this shrine, this sanctuary of pure virgin thought and a maiden's solitary communings with God and her own soul? He gently agitated the leaves around his head, so as not to hear. Then the voice ceased. Immediately afterwards Ulrick was aware that she was at the window. Through the clustering leaves he saw her, that face which he had so often seen illuminated with social emotions gay or grave, now solemn, tender and devout, still and rapt, lit with quiet-burning, immortal fire.

"Mistress Rachel," said Ulrick, speaking very low and very quick, "be not alarmed; let no fear be upon you." But Rachel was alarmed and surprised. She started violently, and was again still—still, though pale and trembling. Ulrick did not pause, but went on, speaking fast, "And your words which you spoke did not come into my mind, for I shook the leaves so that there should not be a hearing with me; and I am where I am, for I saw the one light burning, and there is a great news with me, for Hugh Roe with a mighty host is at hand, and I had speech with him

in his camp, where I was a prisoner; and this castle and all within it are under his protection, and let fear be upon no one. And there is a young Albanian gentleman, my friend—the name to him is Sander, a high nobleman of the Macleod nation, who will guard all here with strength—a very honourable gentleman. And I go now hence to war, from which I may not return, and theeward the love in my heart is as deep as the sea."

Ulrick might have done more prudently had he utterly forborne speech, and he knew it, but the thought of listening, for Rachel might think aloud here at her window-sill, and probably would, alarmed him. Yet he knew well that he would not only affright and alarm, but seriously displease. Hence his hurry and rush of words and haste to make the very best case that he could, and into that rush of hurried speech his love leaped without warning.

Cold and low, nay, cruelly cutting, were the tones in which the outraged maiden replied,—

"We are, indeed, much beholden to you, Master Ulrick."

Murmuring some confused and almost inarticulate expressions, our hero, feeling anything but a hero, began to descend.

"Yet have a care," said Rachel, "for the height is fearsome, and the ivy tendrils treacherous and weak."

"Nay, I am in no danger," replied Ulrick, "save that I tremble knowing well that I have been a passer over of limits and a transgressor of mearings, and if I had my pardon I would not so much tremble."

"*Cia theid ann?*" "Who goeth there?"

The words rang hoarse and minatory through the still night. They came from the sentinel who paced the parapets. In the silence he had caught, or thought that he had caught, the sound of a man's voice somewhere without the castle.

This challenge was perhaps Ulrick's salvation, for now Rachel feared mightily lest he should have been seen, and that a calyver-shot might succeed this fierce challenge.

"Yes, yes," she whispered, "you have my pardon How could you be so foolish? Now do not stir."

Meantime a man was craning over the battlements.

"Mistress Egerton," he said, "was it you who spoke?"

He saw, perhaps, the crown of her fair head in the lamplight.

"Yea," answered the Puritan maiden, forgetful of those high ethical principles which had seemed to her so clear and imperative on that night when she first met Ulrick.

Muttering somewhat, the craning figure above disappeared, leaving Ulrick and Rachel silent and quaking, separated from each other not by the distance of an ell, and each hearing now distinctly the other's heart how it beat.

"Are the tendrils strong, think you?" whispered Rachel. "The man is departed. I said you had my pardon. Doubtless you knew not that I was here."

"No, truly," whispered Ulrick in reply. "I came hither but to kiss the stone walls and to bear

with me one leaf of the ivy. And I saw the light, and I was saying to myself that maybe the constable or a gentleman of the ward was here to whom I might reveal my tidings, and not at the gate, seeing that I am girt with horsemen of Hugh Roe, and have come out of his camp."

"Go now," said Rachael, "but take heed to thy hands and feet; these ivy tendrils are weak and treacherous; and I shall ever pray for thee."

So adjured, however, Ulrick, did not stir.

"Thy white hand, sweet maiden, in token of forgiveness," he said, "and I go."

"Farewell," she whispered, and a white hand as unstained and unspotted by ill as any in the world was clasped in one of the young warrior's.

The white hand sought to leave the other, but could not.

"Mistress Rachel," said Ulrick, "well I know that I am but a rude man of the sword, and not worthy truly to kiss the walls of the house in which it is your pleasure to abide; but the love of my heart flows out to thee like a river of great waters, and thy servant and slave I shall ever be till I die. And now, say it in my ear, but one word, and to me earth will be the highest of the seven heavens, and the glory of the most High God be revealed."

And Ulrick would not quit hold of the imprisoned hand, but on the contrary drew it strongly to himself, and there was danger to herself and him in prolonging this perilous parley, and the flattery did much and love did the rest, and the Puritan maiden leaned her face to where our hero stood in leafy shade, and lips met in love's first pure kiss there above the Sabrann of bright waters, and

in the midst of the fears and alarms, the terrors and horrors, of fratricidal war.

And Ulrick descended very slowly, without noise or motion through the dense ivy, moving foot after foot, hand after hand, with caution and deliberation, for he was now not his own, but another's. Body and soul he henceforth belonged to the Pale-Irish maiden, Rachel Egerton.

Ulrick did not again excite the curiosity of that bemorioned warrior on the battlements whose brazen headpiece he could see shining in the moonlight, and the smoke of whose calyver-match went up from him in faint wreaths as he paced to and fro. Ulrick slid into the black water, reached the opposite shore, and silently made his way up the stream, availing himself of the cover which grew along the bank. From time to time he turned round and saw where love's lamp still shone like a star in the centre of the black keep. So after this perilous adventure, which, however, had ended for him in bliss ineffable, he rejoined his guard.

"Farragh!" he cried, and started to the west, but with all his heart in the east.

And Rachel heard the hoof-beats of the troop ringing clear on the iron ways, but ever fainter and fainter till all was still. Then, with her white hands clasped and interlaced over her fair face, she fell upon her knees with a low cry and wept. Why did she weep? I know not, save that there is a passion which in all its mysterious phases is ever prone to tears—

> "For ever love,
> For ever the sobbing liquid of life."

CHAPTER X.

A CHILD OF THE DEVIL.

THE events of the great war-drama upon which the fate of nations depended now succeeded each other swiftly, and came thick and fast. Hugh Roe having eluded Carew, and having rested his troops in that camp which we visited in company with Ulrick, descended into West Munster with great power, and established himself in Bandon. Carew, instead of pursuing him, marched straight back to Kinsale, and remained there. So all West Munster was left under the control and disposition of the young insurgent chief from the north, and for the present, at least, was lost to the Crown.

Meantime Mountjoy and Carew, knowing that Hugh O'Neill was drawing nigh, also made the most desperate efforts to crush Don Juan before his arrival, but such were the Spaniard's sallies and irruptive quick dashes into their works that they could never deliver one right storming assault upon the walls. Then the news came that Hugh O'Neill was within a day's march of their camp, and that the long-expected Spanish seconds for Don Juan had arrived, and with their treasure, arms, and munitions, had safely landed at Castlehaven a few leagues further to the west.

The moment this Spanish force arrived, Ulrick's lord marched to Castlehaven, and joined them with all his strength. Now, too, something like a revolution swept over all West Munster, and all the lords and gentlemen who had previously been on the side of the Queen rose for Philip and put themselves under the leading of the Spanish commander of the Castlehaven force.

The Queen's army at Kinsale, caught now between the Spaniards, in the town and the huge host of the confederate Irish and Spaniards without, seemed virtually ruined. Everyone expected that in a few days it would be utterly destroyed. Then at this juncture ensued the astonishing Battle of Kinsale, in which a mere handful of Royalist-Irish Connaught-men, under the command of the young chief of the Burkes of Clan-Ricarde and a few English dragoons, utterly routed and put to flight an army of nigh ten times their number seasoned and long-victorious fighting men, and under the command of such famous soldiers as Hugh O'Neill and Red Hugh.

Our hero was in this astonishing battle, and much to his own subsequent surprise yielded to the panic like all the rest, and though splendidly mounted and equipped in shining armour of proof, fled out of the battle with as much swiftness as any other, under some wild impression that the Devil and all Hell broken loose were at his heels.

Then Hugh Roe fled into Spain, sending the remains of his army back to Ulster. Hugh O'Neill, deeply meditating, wended northwards too. Don Juan surrendered. All the West Munster lords, as many as could procure pardon

on tolerable terms, returned to their allegiance. Before the Confederate camp broke up, the lords there assembled appointed O'Sullivan Bere their lieutenant in Munster, and commander of all the insurrectionary forces there. So Ulrick's lord found himself suddenly promoted to a very high place indeed, but in a very few days learned that he alone at the head of his own forces was expected to make head against the Crown. He broke up his camp, and retreated westward into his own country.

Seeing that all was lost, O'Sullivan determined to make peace if he could, and preserve his estates. From his camp in the west he sent Ulrick as his ambassador to Carew. Ulrick went joyfully, bringing with him two attendants. As he passed through the principal street in Cork he saw horse and foot drawn up before a certain house. It was a guard of honour for Don Juan, who had surrendered to the Viceroy, and was now waiting till ships could be procured to convey him and his army back to Spain. He went on to Carew's quarters in the Castle of Cork, and at once gained admission. As he was entering Carew's presence, a tall and remarkably handsome man came towards him in a narrow passage. He was apparently coming from Carew's presence. Ulrick recognised at once the long face, rich olive complexion, peaked beard, hard bright black eyes, and assured bearing of the man. He raised his hat and saluted him respectfully as "Master Blake." The other raised his hat too, but said,—

"Senor, thou art mistaken; that is not my name?"

"Senor," replied Ulrick, "I am not mistaken; thou art James Blake, of Galway, and thou wert in Hugh Roe's company at the camp, and of Sander Ogue, son of Macleod."

Ulrick's voice as he said this rang clear and true along the corridor.

The other started and laid his hand on his sword-hilt; so did Ulrick.

"We shall meet again," said the stranger, "in some place more convenient than this for the decision of our dispute."

"When you will," answered Ulrick; "I have met too many true men to fear a knave," and with a significant look and another grave salutation passed onward.

Ulrick was not mistaken. The man was James Blake, of Galway, believed to be a pillar of the Catholic League in the west. This man, of whom we catch a transient glimpse here, is a name in Irish history. He pursued Hugh Roe into Spain, and poisoned him at Salamanca.

The fat President received Ulrick with great apparent kindness, even with playfulness. When he learned Ulrick's purpose, he informed him that it was the fixed intention of the Queen to destroy O'Sullivan. A letter which the chieftain had written to Philip had been intercepted and sent to her Highness.

This letter reflected on her personally in severe terms. Many other insurgents lords would be pardoned, but O'Sullivan would be prosecuted to destruction.

"That being fixed," said Carew, "why go to destruction along with him? Why not win the

favour with the State by some deed which will enable me to procure thee pardon, and a grant of confiscated O'Sullivan land ?"

He used many friendly expressions to the lad, and spoke with his hand on Ulrick's shoulder. There was a sinister suggestiveness in his eyes which the lad, who was shrewd enough, did not miss.

Discharging all expression out of his face, Ulrick looked quietly into the President's eyes, and asked what he could do.

"Thou canst end the rebellion with a single stroke," answered Carew. "I know thy love for Mistress Rachel Egerton. Do what I ask, and I will secure thee her hand; also five hundred pounds and three quarters (plowlands) of confiscated land."

"That is a great reward!" said Ulrick. "I am then to do some great and perilous feat."

"Great, indeed, but not perilous," said the President.

"What is it then, my lord ?" asked Ulrick.

"To kill the traitor O'Sullivan," answered Carew.

Ulrick did not start, though his face was steadily blenching during this singular interview. He had guessed what was coming.

"How shall I escape death ?" he said. "His lifeguards are ever in attendance on O'Sullivan day and night."

The President stepped to one side of the room and unlocked a small cabinet. He took from it a little green phial.

"Pour this," he said, "in the traitor's drink. A good opportunity will easily present itself."

Ulrick took the phial and placed it in his bosom. From the same cabinet the President took a leathern bag, the contents of which gave out a metallic ring, and gave it to Ulrick.

"This is to bind our compact," he said. "Thou shalt get the five hundred pounds too, nevertheless, full tale."

He repeated again deliberately his former promise, and according to the custom of the age in the making of treaties and compacts took the lad's right hand in his.

Ulrick's hand was deadly cold.

"Thou art in fear," said the President.

"Truly there is fear on me to-night," answered Ulrick, "but it will be over anon."

"Now go, my son," said the President. "Be brave and true, and God have thee in His holy keeping."

Ulrick withdrew, so filled with horror that he could not afterwards remember anything that occurred from the time he left the President's presence till he was greeted by his attendants in the great courtyard of the Castle. Of course his object in seeming to accept the President's proposal was to prevent the latter from employing any other agent to effect his dastardly purpose.

Ulrick had intended to call on the Egertons this day, but was too unmanned by the terrible ordeal through which he had passed. That phial in his bosom, that gold at his girdle, seemed dragging him down to hell. Innocent as he was, he felt himself while that weight was there a fit comrade for Judas.

He bade his servants enjoy themselves as they pleased, and remained the rest of the day by

himself, in his lodgings. As soon as it was dusk he stole out, and standing on the bridge which spanned the south arm of the Lee waited till no one was in sight, and then dropped both the accursed things, phial and gold, into the dark waters of the river. Then he returned to his lodgings greatly relieved. He found there inquiring for him some young officers, English and Irish. One of them he had formerly met at Shandon Castle. This young gentleman, having heard that Ulrick was in town, brought his companions with him to pay their respects, and to invite him to spend the evening with them at their quarters. Ulrick consented, and being by nature and habit gay and sociable he quickly recovered himself, and spent an agreeable evening with this pleasant company. He slept soundly that night, and awoke with no more thought of yesterday's interview with the President than one bestows on an evil dream. He even regarded the affair with satisfaction. The President, believing that he had hired a reliable assassin, would be satisfied, at least for the present.

CHAPTER XI.

LOVE WILL FIND OUT THE WAY.

ULRICK had determined not to leave Cork on this occasion without seeking an interview with Mrs. Egerton, and telling her all. No doubt his wordly prospects were anything but brilliant. He had absolutely no property. His horse, and all his equipment as a knight, he owed to the bounty of his lord, and this lord was engaged now in a hopeless rebellion against the State. But hope is strong in youthful breasts. In one way or another Ulrick believed that with Rachel's love to sustain him he would conquer adverse fate, and be able one day to present himself before her parents as a not unworthy suitor for their daughter's hand.

Next morning, as he was strolling through the city at an early hour, he saw a lady approaching him, attended by a maid carrying a basket. It was Rachel Egerton. They had evidently been making purchases. When she saw him the lady stopped suddenly, and with a start. Ulrick, too, for a moment felt his heart cease to beat. Rachel was the first to recover herself ; she came forward, and, putting out her hand, greeted our hero with much kindness. They walked together to Mrs. Egerton's house. When the servant went in, Ulrick begged the favour of a further walk.

She consented with a blush. They moved as if by common consent towards the river, for agitated minds ever love the society of water, whether still or in motion.

They walked up the river engaged in indifferent conversation till they reached the city wall. There was a postern gate here, now open, through which they passed ; once beyond this gate they were in green fields, planted with trees. A narrow foot-path led along the bank of the murmuring Lee. It was May time, and the birds sang in the trees. With May time and morning, and two already declared lovers walking in solitude by the banks of a beautiful stream, one may guess that there will be results. Into the mutual confidences of these pure young hearts I dare not intrude. Lovers' love-talk is too sacred to be exhibited *coram populo*. Let it be enough to say that Ulrick, in his broken English, which, however, was much improved since we last met him, renewed in passionate language his former declaration of love, that Rachel renewed hers, and that they exchanged their love-kiss and love-tokens. The sun was mounting high when they returned to the city, as happy a pair as ever yet vowed mutual love, this young Irish warrior, *sans peur et sans reproche*, and the beautiful ardent Puritan maiden.

During this interview Rachel informed him of all that had passed since their last meeting.

Ulrick's brave and impetuous, if somewhat rough and untutored Highland friend, the son of Macleod, had, it seems, discharged his duty very honourably. Through the disturbed Lee valley, all in commotion and filled with plunderers, he had

conducted the Egertons safely to the west gate of Cork. By his chivalrous ways and his fresh naïve and entertaining conversation he had gained greatly in the good-will and regard of all, and, as Rachel afterwards informed our hero, something more than regard seemed to pass between the young Scotch warrior and her pretty sister Esther. That was so, and when the Irish wars were over led to romantic complications and adventures which I should much like to relate were it possible, now when my space is so visibly shrinking to a point. Young Macleod only appeared before Kinsale on the eve of the battle. After that disaster he retreated into Ulster under the command of Rory, first Earl of Tyrconnel, Red Hugh's second brother, a light-hearted, out-spoken, and loud-spoken youth; light-headed too, at least not very wise, and resembling Hugh Roe only in good looks and personal courage. Ulrick and young Macleod did not meet again for more than a year, and then in Ulrick's own house, and beside his glowing hearth. But I anticipate.

Ulrick dined with the Egertons that day. Francis was not here: he was under the command of Sir Chas. Wilmot, warring on the Knight of Kerry and the Baron of Lixnaw, western lords still out in action. The lovers imagined that they were cleverly concealing their mutual relation. But at the first glance Mrs. Egerton knew what had happened.

When Ulrick subsequently laid bare his mind to that gracious and tender-hearted lady, and implored her sanction of the relations between himself and Rachel, not one word did she breathe concerning

the next great question, viz., how he proposed to make and sustain a home to which he might lead his beloved. She spoke of earthly love, how it was a weak image, a faint shadow of divine love, then prayed in his company, and wept, and ended by kissing him tenderly, and invoking God's blessing upon his and her daughter's love.

"And when these wars are ended," she said, "and all thy worldly plans arranged, go to Carrickfergus, to my husband, and get his consent and blessing as you have mine."

Later in the afternoon Ulrick, with his men, rode down that street, moving towards the West Port. Rachel, herself unseen, watched him till he was out of sight. As she turned away her mother stood beside her. Mrs. Egerton said nothing, but with a smile full of mother's love and promise of help folded her daughter in her arms and tenderly kissed her.

As it is not my intention to relate the events of the war waged so bravely by O'Sullivan against the Presidential Government, I will ask the reader to imagine Ulrick as taking his full share in all the romantic vicissitudes of the heroic struggle. He was in the battle of Castledermot, when Tyrell, hoping to hinder the disembarkation of Carew's forces in Berehaven, was defeated. He was in the camisade or nocturnal assault afterwards delivered by Tyrell upon Carew's camp before the walls of Dunboy Castle. He witnessed in helpless agony the storming of Dunboy, and recalled the strange vision which had formerly passed before his waking eyes when he contemplated his beloved nest of eagles. He

was in the furious fighting which continued so many days and nights in the defiles of Glengariff, when O'Sullivan sought to bar the way into Berehaven against Lord Barry in the second invasion of the little principality. Everyone knows something of what followed—how O'Sullivan's mercenaries deserted him, band by band, and marched away northwards ; how most of his own people deserted him, too, and how in the end, with a few hundred faithful followers, he commenced his celebrated retreat into the north to O'Rourke, fighting night and day against the innumerable enemies who sought to destroy him. Love seemed to have determined to bring Ulrick whole and unscathed out of this fierce war. Ulrick did his duty faithfully and manfully, like a true servant to his lord, yet never received a disabling wound, not even in the pitched battle of Aughrim, when O'Sullivan's starving army converted imminent destruction into a glorious victory. Ulrick was one of the few who stood by the chief's side in the night when far away they beheld the red hospitable lights which shone from O'Rourke's great castle on the shores of Lough Gill, which was the end of their wild journey.

O'Sullivan took some part in the wars of Ulster, but ere long, determined to seize an opportunity which presented itself and fly to Spain. Though the Queen was now dead, he had sought in vain to win a pardon from James I. When O'Sullivan announced his intention to Ulrick, the latter at once laid bare all his love secret to the chieftain, and begged his permission to remain behind in Ireland.

O'Sullivan, who did not at the time know how much he was indebted to his young fol ower, listened with sympathy,and at once gave a cheerful consent.

"Thou hast been faithful and valiant in my service, dear Ulrick," he said, "and shalt be rewarded as is fitting."

He bade his treasurer count out to the lad 500*l.* in pure Spanish money. The Elizabethan-Irish coin of this epoch was debased. Rebel Ulster had beaten the Government to bankruptcy. Consequently 500*l.* of honest coin represented a vast sum of money. Ulrick, weeping, kissed his lord's hands, and bade him remember that he was going as an exile into a strange land, bringing many dependents with him.

"I can well spare it, dear Ulrick," answered O'Sullivan. "I have brought with me in safety out of Munster the whole of the treasures which I accumulated for what promised to be a long war, and for the payment of the professional soldiery who fled from me in Glengariff. Believe me, I can well spare it. Moreover, I have reason to believe that on my arrival in Spain I shall taste the great King's munificence there as one who ventured and lost all in his cause."

"My lord," said Ulrick, "keep well on thy guard, even in Spain. Admit no Irishman lightly to thy intimacy."

He then related his singular meeting with James Blake in the corridor of the Castle of Cork, and afterwards the whole of his own conversation with the President. "And as thou knowest, my lord," he concluded, "Hugh Roe is now dead

and James Blake returned from Spain with the news."

The chieftain looked very grave. Then he said,—

"Surely I shall pay as much for faithful service as that vile man would pay for a foul treachery."

Again he summoned the treasurer, and bade him count out 500*l.* more to Ulrick, who protested in vain against this very extraordinary benefaction.

Ulrick waited on his lord till he set sail, then, having provided himself with guards, he rode through a still disturbed country to Lifford, waited there upon Sir Henry Docwra, governor of these parts, a gent eman of the highest honour, courage, and probity. He remained under Docwra's protection till his pardon under the Great Seal of Ireland arrived. With few exceptions subordinates in rebellion could get their pardon by paying for it. He entrusted his treasure to Sir Henry, and, still retaining his retinue of hired soldiers, rode across Ulster to Carrickfergus. Here he intended to visit Captain Charles Egerton, constable of that fortress and father of Rachel, and gain, if possible, his consent to the marriage. Putting up at the principal hostel there, he was overjoyed to find that his friend Francis Egerton was then with his father at the castle. Ulrick waited upon him, and was received with expressions of delight, which were redoubled when Ulrick informed him of his own relations with Rachel, which, with much confusion and many blushings, he succeeded in doing. Together the young men went into the presence of Captain Egerton, a well-grizzled and severe-looking old Elizabethan warrior. Ulrick's appearance was so distinguished and his bearing

so upright and almost stately, that Captain Egerton at first thought he had to do with O'Rourke, Maguire, or one of the great insurgent potentates of the north, most of whom, by the way, were mere lads, hardly older than Ulrick. When he learned who Ulrick really was, his countenance fell visibly, and when his son explained the object of Ulrick's visit, he seemed to have some difficulty in preserving his politeness and self-control. Ulrick, deeming that the proper moment had arrived for such tactics, now produced and expanded on the table certain documents. One was his pedigree, drawn up and attested by a well-known antiquary of West Munster Captain Egerton only smiled as he glanced at this, though the simple lover gave it chief prominence. The second was Docwra's receipt for 1000*l.*, and promise to pay it on demand, at which the old warrior stared with all his eyes. Never in his life had he owned a twentieth part of such a sum. The third was an eulogy of Ulrick's moral, intellectual, and even physical qualities, such as his expertness with his weapons, management of horses, etc., expressed in the strongest language. At the foot of the document appeared the words: "I am O'Sullivan," an autograph, and his seal, expressed in a large spot of green wax.

A long silence now followed, which was broken by the old man saying to his son,—

"Write to thy mother and sister that they repair hither without delay."

Mrs. Egerton and her daughter were at the time in Dublin, and on their way to Carrickfergus, but had intended to stay some time in the capital.

He also said to Ulrick, "Sup with me and the officers of the ward to-night."

Ulrick withdrew from the presence of the grizzly old warrior, feeling that the battle had been fought and won. His credentials, both those in writing and those which he bore in his face and exhibited in his demeanour, could hardly have been better. What chiefly weighed, however, with the old man was Ulrick's astounding quantity of ready money. It was a time when everyone was poor. Few Irish gentlemen, military or otherwise, had purses which they could fling against the wind. In those days it was easier to secure a great estate than to put together a few pounds. The Government paid in base money, and even so, paid very ill.

In fact, Ulrick had won. In a few days the lovers were formally betrothed, and preparations for the marriage urged forward. Captain Egerton had little difficulty in procuring for himself a fine tract of waste and tenantless but very fertile land, out of the confiscated Clannaboy estates in the neighbourhood of the Bann. This he gave to Ulrick, some of whose ready money went, I suspect, in return for the gift to the constable. Soon, in a beautiful neighbourhood on the shore of the river, and hard by an old ruined O'Neill castle, arose the house to which Ulrick was to bring his bride —a house pronounced by all to be the best in that side of the country. It was thatched, indeed, but very few gentlemen at that time lived in slated houses. There was a great wedding in the castle at Carrickfergus, and when it was ended Ulrick and Rachel were husband and wife.

Indeed, all over Ireland just now there was a vast amount of marrying and giving in marriage. The savage parties which so recently had been even slaying each other's children, showing pity neither to the bald head of the ancient nor the bald head of the babe, rushed now with alacrity, with pipings and trumpetings, into matrimonial alliances. For the century-lasting struggle was over and its great issues decided, and out of the bloody welter and the roaring surges, Aphrodite arose new-born, shining like her own peerless star on the edge of night and morning.

> "Flushed from the full-flushed foam,
> And imperial her foot on the sea."

Of these numerous weddings, English and Irish, Royalist Irish and Confederate Irish, the most brilliant was that of the young chief of the High Burkes, hero of the battle of Kinsale, and the daughter of Walsyngham, widow of Sir Philip Sidney, widow also of Robert, Earl of Essex. That was the most brilliant, but I shall ask the reader to believe with me that Ulrick's and Rachel's was the happiest.

Francis Egerton started for London after the wedding. When he returned, sixteen months later, and rode to his sister's house upon the Bann, there met him in the clematis-covered white porch a beautiful young woman, with sparkling eyes and a face suffused with glowing colour. On her breast she bore a tiny burthen, to her more dear than all the riches of the earth, a little infant boy whom she called Ulrick, and whose face she tenderly

uncovered as a rare treat for the fashionable youth who had just arrived. Behind her, with such an expression as one can imagine, appeared the elder Ulrick, and the fashionable youth felt profoundly, though he did not say it, that love dwelt here, and with a full determination to stay, in this pretty house by the gliding waters of the Bann.

> "The golden gates of sleep unbar,
> Where strength and beauty, met together,
> Kindle their image like a star
> In a sea of glassy weather."

THE END.

APPENDIX.

POSTSCRIPT.

The preceding tale is concerned with the last, the longest, the bravest, and the most combined of the many efforts made by the Irish chieftains to resist the encroachments of Tudor power. It embraces the Viceroyalty of Lord Mountjoy and the Presidentiad of Sir George Carew; the landing of the Spanish Armada under Don Juan de Aquila at Kinsale; the concentration thither of all the Royalist and insurgent forces of the island; Mountjoy's siege operations against that town and its heroic defence by Don Juan; the arrival of Don Zubiaur with fresh supplies, the revolt of West Munster, the battle of Kinsale, and the promotion of O'Sullivan Bere to the command of the insurgent forces of Munster. So it may be regarded as a sort of continuation of the Hon. Miss Lawless's work, "With Essex in Ireland." It in fact relates to the next chapter of Irish history. Mountjoy succeeded Essex as Chief Governor.

The battle of Kinsale is not usually reckoned amongst the decisive battles of the world; I think it should. This at least is certain, that it

was the conviction of all the chief officials in Ireland at the time that the defeat of the Royalist army at Kinsale would be followed instantaneously by the revolt of the whole island to King Philip. It is difficult to believe that an independent and Catholic Ireland, under the protection of Spain, would not have exercised a seriously disturbing influence upon the subsequent history of England, especially during the war between Charles I. and his Parliament.

Be that, however, as it may, no one can deny the significance of this battle in the history of Ireland. In its results, direct and indirect, no preceding event can bear comparison with it, while it seems to have determined the channe in which Irish history has since flowed. Hence the importance of a correct appreciation of the contemporaneous social and political condition of Ireland.

The time of which I treat is covered by the Carew State Papers, the *Pacata Hibernia*, "Fynes Morison," the "Annals of the Four Masters," and Philip O'Sullivan's brightly written Latin narrative.

There is unfortunately a bad gap in the Calendar of State Papers, and the period here treated falls within that gap. The last volume of the Calendar for the 16th century ends with the year 1598. The next succeeding volume begins with 1603. Still I do not think that the publication of the Calendar for these years would have made any serious difference in my general estimate of the leading characters and events, though it would have certainly supplied fresh minutiæ and some interesting anecdotes.

Philip O'Sullivan and the Four Masters supply a much needed corrective of the State Paper literature. They reveal the chivalrous side of the age. They sound the heroic note. They treat their times in the same spirit in which Homer and Froissart treated theirs. The State Papers, on the surface at least, show us nothing of this; their tendency is to make us think meanly of every one, of the officials as well as of the chieftains. On the other hand, the magnanimity of the Four Masters includes all: Perrott, Bingham, Clifford, and other eminent Englishmen move through their pages with something of the port of ancient heroes. All the Queen's friends look incomparably larger and nobler in the Irish record than in that which they wrote themselves.

In fact the age of chivalry lasted longest in Ireland: there was still a great deal of it, both latent and patent, in the Ireland of which I treat.

Let me give just one characteristic example. A youth named Hugh O'Gallagher led an army against the Earl of Tyrone, and a good opportunity presented itself of making a night attack upon the Earl. This was pointed out to O'Gallagher, but in vain. "Through pride and greatness of soul he did not consider that honourable, and he said, 'Surely I will not assail the Earl under cover of the blackness of night, but in the full clearness of the light of the day I will fight a fierce battle with him.' And this was fulfilled, for he attacked the Earl on the morrow and defeated him, and the Earl lost many people." A modern soldier would consider Hugh a vainglorious ass, but his self-restraint would have been easily understood in

the middle ages and commended by Bayard as the conduct of a gentleman and in strict accordance with the fifth article of the institute o chivalry. A mere student of State Papers is quite unaware that men like Hugh were plenty n the land, and that such a temper as his was still abroad and strong; it was failing indeed, but it was there. Ulrick is, I hope, a character, but he is also a type. In the military Irish caste there were hundreds of such loyal, upright, brave and honourable men.

Tyrone and Hugh Roe, though they move through the story, are treated slightly. I feared to enlarge upon such characters without the assistance of the complete Calendar of State Papers.

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